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# **POLITICAL, SOCIO-ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL HISTORY OF RAJASTHAN**



# **Political, Socio-Economic and Cultural History of Rajasthan**

(Earliest Times to 1947)

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**Panchsheel Prakashan, Jaipur**



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## PREFACE

Over two hundred year long association of the princely States of Rajasthan with the Mughals had created a deep impact on the art and culture of the region in several ways. It was under the inspiration of Abul Fazl, the celebrated author of *Ain-i-Akbari* and a senior minister in Akbar's court, that the scholars in Rajasthan started writing "Khyats". The earliest and the most reliable among them was 'Muhnot Nensi-ki-khyat' written in 1665 by Nensi, the soldier-statesman in the court of Maharaja Jaswantsingh of Jodhpur.

Col. James Tod, Political Agent of the East India Company at Udaipur, laid firm foundation of the history of Mewar and other major States of Rajasthan. His celebrated work, 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' published between 1829 and 1832 caused quite a stir in Europe. Kaviraja Shyamaldas's 'Veer Vinod' (1892) not only made a major contribution to the history of Rajasthan but also made considerable improvement over Tod in several respects. The most complete work on Rajasthan's history was that of Mahamahopadhyaya Gaurishankar Heerachand Ojha published in several volumes in 1930s.

Since the independence of India and formation of a united state of Rajasthan, a number of scholars have written books throwing fresh light on the achievements and failures of some of the rulers who had figured prominently in the works of Nensi, Tod, Shyamaldas, Ojha etc. A few scholars have also ventured into writing an integrated history of Rajasthan with some degree of success. The present book is one more effort in this direction.

We have pieced together all available archaeological and other evidence and have produced a coherent account of the pre and proto historical cultures which flourished in Rajasthan. We have tried to link these cultures with the advent of the Aryans and the Vedic age. We have dwelt upon the influence of Buddhism and Jainism over Rajasthan and

emergence of certain new communities which have made valuable contribution in various fields.

A number of Rajput dynasties were established in Rajasthan from 6th Century AD to 12th Century A.D. The earliest and the most durable among them were the Guhilis (later on Shishodias) of Mewar. The credit for attaining imperial status, however, went to the Pratiharas of Marwar and the Chauhans of Ajmer, though their tenure as imperial rulers was short.

Sultan Shahabuddin Ghori was the first Muslim ruler who established his sway over north India by 1192. He was followed by the Ghulam, Khilji, Tughluq, Saiyad and Lodi dynasties in quick succession. Then came the Mughals (1526) who ruled over India for more than two centuries. It was during this period that the Rajasthan States accepted the authority of the central Government in real terms. While the Shishodias of Mewar were the last to do so, the Kachhavas of Amber/Jaipur and the Rathores of Jodhpur and Bikaner became pillars of the Mughal empire and played an active role in the affairs of the empire.

With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal empire started disintegrating. The Marathas took advantage of the unsettled conditions and made forays in Rajasthan. They devastated and bled the region for about a century. Finding themselves helpless against the Maratha tyranny, the States invited the East India Company for help. They signed the treaties of "subsidiary alliance" with it in 1818 and accepted the British as the paramount power. The paramountcy lapsed when India became free in 1947.

The history books written on Rajasthan so far have revolved round the events connected with various ruling chiefs. The modern trend, however, is to lay greater emphasis on the influence of political and social institutions on the lives of the common people. We have made an humble effort in this direction.

Our initial scheme was to give only brief description of the political events and concentrate mainly on the socio-economic and cultural history of the region. We, however, soon realised that given the complexities of the problems faced by the princely states it would be almost impossible for the reader to follow the socio-economic narration

unless he was provided with a detailed and thorough account of the political situation at a given time. This would explain the reason for the volume becoming somewhat bulky.

We admit that in spite of our best efforts we have not been able to give a full picture of the socio-economic scenario in the region from time to time. We have, however, laid the foundation on which others could build a sound structure and fulfill a longfelt need in this relatively less explored area.

We are very much grateful to the well known archaeologist Vijay Kumar of the Department of Archaeology and Museums, Rajasthan who was kind enough to go through the MSS of the book. His suggestions, valuable as they were, have been incorporated in the book.

We are also thankful to M/s Panchsheel Prakashan for the promptness with which they have published this voluminous book.

**Authors**

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## CHAPTER 1

# GENESIS OF THE WORD 'RAJASTHAN'

According to the study so far made the expression 'Rajasthan' was first used in the Bansantgarh stone inscription of 682 V.S. (625 A.D.). Later on it found mention in 'Muhnot Nenasi Ki Khyat' and in Veerbhan's 'Rajroopak' both written in 18th century. The expression in the stone inscription as well as in the two works was used in relation to the abode where the ruler lived<sup>1</sup>. It was the famous historian Col. James Tod who used the expression in the larger and wider context. In his celebrated work 'Annals and Antiquities of Rajasthan' published in 1829 Tod defined Rajasthan as "that part of the country where Rajput rulers reside".

Prior to Tod another Englishman, George Thomas, in his memoirs published in 1805, described the region as 'Rajputana'<sup>2</sup>. By 1818 practically all the princely states in the region had entered into "subsidiary alliance" with the East India Company. In 1832 the Company established an agency at Ajmer to exercise control over these states.

The Britishers (East India Company) preferred to call the region as Rajputana rather than Rajasthan. The head of agency at Ajmer was thus called "Agent to the Governor General in Rajputana". The word 'Rajasthan' was for the time being forgotten. The Board of High School and Intermediate Education established at Ajmer in 1930 was named as "Board of High School and Intermediate Education, Rajputana (including Ajmer), Central India and Gwalior". The first University established in the region as late as January 1947 was also named as the University of Rajputana. Even the local unit of the All India States People's Conference established at Jaipur in 1946 was called the 'Regional Council for Rajputana'.

Soon after India attained freedom from the British rule, the word 'Rajasthan' was again in the air. The Regional Council in a resolution

1 Dr. P.L. Menaria, *Rajasthan Sahitya Ka Itihas*, p.4

2 Willam Franklin, *Military Memoirs of Mr. George Thomas*, p.376

demanding merger of the various Rajputana states and Ajmer Merwara into a united state of Rajasthan. Similar demand was made by the Socialist Party of India headed by the late Jai Prakash Narayan. The nationalist organisations dropped the name 'Rajputana' in favour of 'Rajasthan' obviously because the former was associated with the British rule in India.

There were 23 states and 3 chiefships<sup>1</sup> under the jurisdiction of the Rajputana Agency. The interim Government formed at the centre on the eve of independence set up the States Department on July 5, 1947 with a view "to secure the accession and consolidation of 550 and odd princely states into sizable administrative units and their democratisation". Sardar Vallabhbhai Patel, Deputy Prime Minister, was put in charge of the States Department with V.P. Menon as its Secretary. One of the earliest acts of the Department was to transfer the administrative control of the states of Palanpur, Danta, Idar, Vijaynagar and Sirohi from the Rajputana Agency to the Western India and Gujarat States Agency. This was part of the design of the Gujarat leaders towards formation of a greater Gujarat State.

The process of integration of Rajputana states started early in 1948. The Matsya Union was constituted with the merger of Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Karoli states and the chiefship of Neemrana on May 15, 1948. The United State of Rajasthan with Kota as capital came into being on March 25, 1948 with the integration of the states of Kota, Bundi, Jhalawar, Shahpura, Kishangarh, Tonk, Dungarpur, Banswara and Pratapgarh and the chiefships of Lawa and Kushalgarh. With Mewar joining the new State on April 18 the capital was shifted from Kota to Udaipur. The states of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Bikaner and Jaisalmer were integrated with the United State of Rajasthan on March 30, 1949. The reorganised state was now called 'Rajasthan'. Jaipur was made as its capital. The Matsya Union was merged in Rajasthan in May, 1949. The fate of Sirohi was decided on January 24, 1950. Eighty nine villages in the Abu road and Dilwara tehsils, which included the hill station of Mount Abu and the world famous Jain temples of Dilwara, were merged with the then composite state of Bombay while the rest of the state was transferred to Rajasthan. When, however, the reorganisation of the States took place on November 1, 1956 in accordance with the recommendations of the States Reorganisation Commission headed by Justice Fazal Ali, the 89 villages of the former Sirohi State together with Ajmer Merwara were merged in Rajasthan. The process of formation of Rajasthan was thus completed in five phases.

1. The three non-salute states known as chiefships were Kushalgarh, Lawa and Neemrana. .

## CHAPTER 2

### GEOGRAPHICAL SETTING

The State of Rajasthan is situated between  $23^{\circ} 3'$  and  $30^{\circ} 12'$  north latitudes and  $69^{\circ} 30'$  to  $78^{\circ} 17'$  longitudes and forms part of north-western India. It is bounded on the east by Madhya Pradesh, Uttar Pradesh and Haryana; on the south by Madhya Pradesh and Gujarat; on the north by Pakistan, Punjab and Haryana and by Pakistan on the west. The Tropic of Cancer just cuts the southern most part of the State. The State has about 1200 km. long frontier with Pakistan and thus occupies a position of great strategic importance.

With an area of 3,42,239 sq. km., Rajasthan is the second largest state in India. It is an irregular rhombus in shape with the maximum diagonal length, east to west, of 869 kms. and north to south, of 821 kms.

The most conspicuous physiographic feature of the State is the Aravalli range—one of the oldest mountain systems in the world. It runs from Palanpur, on the south west, to Delhi, in the north east. Its total length is 692 kms. of which 550 kms. lies in Rajasthan from Khetari in the north east to Khed Brahma in the south west. The highest ranges are around Mount Abu in the extreme south west, the principal peak, Guru Shikhar, being 1727 meters (5056 ft.) above seal level. The height of the ranges decreases as one moves towards the north-east ranging from 1070 to 1220 metres around Udaipur to about 300 metres near Delhi. In the middle of the Aravallis, near Ajmer, there lies a number of interior basins, the most important being the Sambhar lake with an area of about 230 sq. kms.

The Aravallis divide the State diagonally into two natural but unequal regions. The west and the north western region, which is about three fifths of the State, is arid and semiarid, while the east and the south-eastern region covering about two fifths of the State's area is of varying physiographic features.

The Aravallis form the water-shade for Rajasthan. In the western region the Luni and its tributaries, the Jojari and the Jawai, flow north-east and drain into the Arabian Sea, while in the eastern region the Banas and its tributaries, the Berach, the Kothari and the Khari flow south-east and join the Chambal. The Chambal joins the Yamuna and the Ganga which finally drains into the Bay of Bengal.

### **(1) The North-Western Region**

Lying to the west and the north- west of the Aravallis, the vast sandy plains are part of the great Thar desert and comprise the districts of Ganganagar, Bikaner, Churu, Nagaur, Jodhpur, Jaisalmer, Barmer, Sirohi, Pali, Jalore and major parts of Sikar and Jhunjhunu districts. The density of population in the area ranges between 9 persons per sq.km. in Jaisalmer to 127 in Sirohi. The density of population in the region stands at 79 persons per sq.km. The region is dotted with small hillocks and isolated patches of shrubs and stunted vegetation. Otherwise the entire area is a vast sandy expanse with its ever-shifting sand-dunes influencing the physiography and climate of the region to a considerable extent.

On the basis of the 25 cm. isohyetal line and the large sized dunes the area can be classified into three zones, namely (i) the sandy arid plains (Thar or the Great Desert), (ii) the semi- arid plains or the Little Desert and (iii) the canal-zone.

#### **(i) The arid plains**

The sandy arid plains, popularly known as the great Thar Desert, lie in the extreme western part of the State. They are covered by the sand-dunes and run from the Great Runn along the Pakistan border to Punjab. The sand-dunes keep on rising in their size and extent as one moves west and north westwards. The average rainfall in the area varies between 12 and 30 cms. Almost all the precipitation is obtained during the months of July and August. The most characteristic feature of the climate of the area is its extreme dryness and extreme temperatures.

During the summer with the scorching wind ('Loo') blowing, the heat is intense. Throughout the area dust storms, some of which are violent, are frequent occurrences. The mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures are 45°C and 40°C respectively.

Due to scanty and erratic rainfall and sandy soils, the vegetation is very sparse and only few trees can be observed dotting the land at

considerable intervals. Broadly the vegetation of the area varies from a spiny scrub jungle to dry deciduous forest type, consisting of various species of trees such as Khejra, Rohida, Ber, Date-palm and Lasoda. Khejra, the most important tree of the area, has its roots so deep that it withstands the vagaries of weather. It provides the basic source of fodder for cattle, camels and goats. Its wood is used for burning and making carts and agricultural implements. Babul and Banwal trees are found in good number. These trees provide gum as well as wood for furniture making and farm tools. Date-palm grows in sufficient number around Oasis. Kair, Phog and Akra are the main varieties of shrubs which thrive in the area. Dhaman (also known as Shewan) and Bhurat are valuable varieties of the local grass.

Fauna of a region is dependent on its environmental and climatic conditions. The available vegetation indicates that only sheep, goats, camels and deers can survive in the sandy arid areas. In the sandy plains of Bikaner, Jaisalmer, and Barmer districts Imperial Sand-Grouse, a rare bird, and the Great Indian Bustard are found. These birds are famous for their delicious meat. The important mammal of the area is the Asiatic wild ass. They are available in good number in the area. The wild pig, wolf, red lynx, jackal and wild dog are the other important animals. Besides, various types of poisonous snakes and amphibian reptiles and more than one and a half dozens of specimen of rodents are found in the area.

### **(ii) The semi-arid plains**

The area between the Thar desert in the west and the Aravallis in the east stretching from Jalore-Sirohi in the south to Ganganagar-Churu in the north, are semi-arid plains. The conspicuous features of the area are the Luni basin in the south and the interior drainage (Shekhawati tract covering Jhunjhunu and Sikar districts) in the north east.

The Luni river rises from the Aravalli hills near south west of Ajmer and flows towards the south west. The Luni and its tributaries, viz., Khari and Jawai, drain the south eastern border of Jodhpur district and Pali, Jalore and Sirohi districts. The topography is marked by hills with steep slopes and extensive alluvial plains. The southern area possesses good quality Matiyali-‘Bhuri’ (brown)-soil, which requires heavy dose of water to produce wheat and gram. ‘Retili’, another loamy soil, fine grained and sandy without any clay at all, is very fertile when found in depressions. It is called ‘Dehir’ in local parlance.

North of the Luni basin upto the State's border with Punjab is the plain area of internal drainage. The eastern boundary is marked by the 50 cm. isohyetal line. The Aravalli is not a continuous range north-east of Ajmer. It is broken and full of wind gaps. The plain is conspicuous by the existence of several sand-hills and low depressions. A number of small basins are found around the Jaipur-Jodhpur saddle. The temperature being high, the evaporation of the saline flood water results in the deposits of salt and soda at different places in these depressions. The important salt lakes in the area are Sambhar, Degana, Kuchaman and Didwana.

The extreme climatic conditions make the area hot with scorching wind blowing during the summer. The mean minimum and maximum temperatures during the summer range from 10°C to 45°C respectively. In winter, high fluctuations are recorded in the night, the temperature usually falls around 0°C. In the day it rises upto 30°C. The average rainfall is 30-50 cms. The amount of rainfall rises as one moves eastwards. July and August are the main rainy months. The spread of rainfall is uneven and occurrence is erratic which often results in draughts.

The land is fertile in this area as compared to the arid zone. Many varieties of trees are grown here. Date-palm is found in abundance. Fruit trees such as Palu, Ber and Jhar-beri are grown. The districts of Sirohi, Pali and Nagaur produce wheat, barley, oilseeds and pulses in good quantity.

The area is known for good quality breed of animals. The cow of Sanchor, the bull of Nagaur, the buffalo of Didwana and the horse of Balotra are famous all over the country. The important breeds of sheep like Nali, Pugal, Magra, Chokhla and Marwari produce high quality wool. Various varieties of reptiles and rodents are also found in the area.

### **(iii) The canal zone**

Parts of the arid and semi arid plains, falling in the districts of Ganganagar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer, are covered by the Indira Gandhi Canal Project. A part of Ganganagar district is also covered by the Gang-canal system. The area in these districts has undergone a tremendous transformation in terms of its topography, vegetative cover and even climate because of the introduction of canal irrigation on large scale. The area, which we prefer to call as "Canal Zone" has thus assumed a distinctive character.

The Ganganagar district has shown a complete change in its landscape from vast sandy plains into the land of granary, thanks to the construction of the Gang canal during 1922-27 by the late Maharaja Gangasingh of Bikaner. It was through his relentless efforts that he could bring the waters of the Sutlej from Punjab to his state. The total command area of the Gangcanal is 1.46 lakh hectares.

The Indira Gandhi Canal Project, when completed, will irrigate 13.88 lakh hectares of land in the districts of Ganganagar, Bikaner and Jaisalmer. The project is estimated to cost Rs 2000.00 crore. It is likely to be completed by the year 2005 AD. Meanwhile, it has already created irrigation potential to the tune of 7 lakh hectares. Thus the area, which was once characterised by blazing sand-dunes and thorny shrubs is being turned into blooming fields and gardens.

## **(2) East and South-East Region**

The region has three distinct natural divisions, viz., (i) the southern hill area covering the districts of Udaipur, Sirohi, Dungarpur and Banswara, (ii) the eastern plains consisting of Jaipur, Tonk, Sawaimadhopur, Bharatpur and Bhilwara districts and (iii) the south-eastern plateau falling in the districts of Chittorgarh, Bundi, Kota and Jhalawar.

In contrast to the North-Western arid zone, this region is comparatively more fertile, possesses a number of rivers mostly of course non-perennial, wide valleys and broad stretches of excellent soil. The density of population in the region is above 157 persons per sq.km.

### **(i) The southern hill area :**

The area is a net work of hills and tablelands. The highest section of the Arvalli range lies northwest of Udaipur between Kumbhalgarh and Gogunda. In local parlance, it is known as 'Bhorat' plateau. The average elevation of this plateau is 1125 metres. In the south-east of Udaipur the hills are characterized by a great node of spurs and carving ridges. Here lies the great "divider" of the north Indian drainage systems, the one flowing north eastwards to the Bay of Bengal and the other towards south-west into the Arabian sea.

The important rivers of this area are the Banas, the Berach and the Kothari flowing north eastwards and the Mahi, the Jakam, the Son and the Sai flowing south westwards into the gulf of Cutch and Combay. The Mahi is the only perennial river in the region.

**(ii) The eastern plains:**

These plains claim more than one half (55%) of the total area of the region. The area is covered with alluvium and served by rivers like the Banas and the Banganaga. The districts of Jaipur, Sawaimadhopur, Tonk and Bhilwara are generally level and open, although the surface is crossed and diversified by ranges of hills and isolated peaks.

The Chappan plains in the south covering the area of south eastern Udaipur, southern Chittorgarh, Banswara and eastern Dungarpur districts is drained by the Mahi and its tributaries the Jakam, the Gomti, the Anas, and the Som. The southern part of the Chappan plain is highly dissected by the Mahi and its tributaries. The area is locally known as 'Vagad'.

The Banas basin covering the areas of north eastern Udaipur, north western Chittorgarh, Bhilwara, Tonk and Sawaimadhopur districts is drained by the Banas and its tributaries, the Berach, the Kothari, the Khari and the Moral. The Banas rises from the Aravallis near Kumbhalgarh (Udaipur district) and after running, 480 kms. long tortuous course, joins the Chambal near Rameshwar, on the border between Sawaimadhopur (Rajasthan) and Madhya Pradesh.

The Banganga is a notable river in northern part of the plain flowing through the districts of Jaipur and Bharatpur. It rises near Bairath (Jaipur) and after crossing 380 kms long course flows into the Yamuna near Fatehabad in Agra district.

**(iii) The south eastern plateau :**

This plateau covers the south-eastern and eastern part of the State alongwith the Chambal river which drains the greater part of the area. To the north of the town of Jhalrapatan, there lies a plateau, which is known as the 'Haroti-Ka-Pathar'. The Chambal and its tributaries the Kalisind and the Parbati have formed a triangular alluvial basin containing deep black soils.

The northern part of Chittorgarh district generally consists of an elevated plateau sloping gradually to the north east. To the east of Chittorgarh is a series of hills, all running parallel north and south forming narrow confined valleys. The district of Bundi is also traversed throughout its whole length south west to north east by a double line of hills constituting the central Bundi range, which divides the district into almost two equal parts.



Rising in Madhya Pradesh and after crossing nearly 257 kms. the Chambal enters the State near Chaurasigarh. Then it enters Kota district. It forms the natural boundaries first between Bundi and Kota districts and then between Kota and Sawaimadhopur districts. It also runs along the border between Rajasthan and Madhya Pradesh for about 241 kms. The total length of the river is 965 kms of which only one third of the length it flows in the State. It is a perennial river. Climatically the entire east and south east region is, more or less, homogeneous. The amount of precipitation rises as one moves south and south eastwards. The average annual rainfall in the region is 58 cms. The temperature in the eastern plain areas is generally higher compared to the plateau and the hill areas. The mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures in the plain areas are 24° and 9°C respectively during the winter season. But at many places, the temperature goes down around freezing point in the month of January. In summer the mean daily maximum and minimum temperatures stand at 41° and 26° C respectively in the plain areas. Dust-storms are usually experienced in the region during May and June. The hills and the plateau areas are comparatively mild in climate. The mean daily maximum and minimum temperature in hill area is 25° and 8°C respectively. Similar temperature conditions prevail in the plateau region.

Large varieties of flora are found in the region. The hill area is particularly fortunate in this respect. A variety of trees such as teak, bamboo, pipal, dhak, kadam, mango, mahuwa, dhokara, godal, siras, khair and wild date-palm are grown here. Many of these species thrive in plateau and plain areas as well. In plateau, bel, tendu, cheela, anwala and chiranli trees thrive in good number.

The plain area is rich in cultivation mainly due to topography, soil and availability of water. Wheat, barley, pulses, cotton, sugarcane and varieties of vegetables are grown in this area. The rich black soil tract between the Chambal and the Parbati rivers produce fine cotton, sugarcane and groundnuts.

The domestic animals such as cattle, buffaloes, sheep, goats, horses and mares, donkeys, camels, pigs and mules are found in good number in the region. The region is not as famous in its animal breed as the western arid region, though the number of different animals found in this region is greater than that in the western arid region.

## CHAPTER 3

# THE PRE AND PROTO HISTORIC CULTURES

### Stone Age

Though Rajasthan is just 44 years old as a State of the Indian Union, the earliest traces of human activity in the region go back to the pre-historic period. The tools like convex, scrappers, points, burins, choppers, hand axes, cleavers and blades found in the valley of the Luni river in Marwar region belong to the Middle Paleolithic. The artifacts of the Luni industry have been found at Kekra and Baridhani<sup>1</sup>.

In Hadoti region, implements of the Palaeolithic have been found in the Chambal valley. An organised archaeological exploration in the valley may yield valuable information. The shells of two eggs of Ostrich found at Chandrasel near Kota are stated to be 40,000 years old according to the well-known archaeologist, Dr. Robert G. Fedneric<sup>2</sup>.

The most complete sequence of geomorphic and archaeological evidence is found in the Pushkar locality in Ajmer district. Mesolithic living sites are found on the surface of the sand deposits on the crest of dunes surrounding the Budha Pushkar Lake<sup>3</sup>.

Another Mesolithic site at Bagor situated on the banks of the Kotha river in Bhilwara district was excavated by the well known archaeologist V.N. Misra, in the early sixties. According to him, the discovery reveals "a regular occupation of the site over a period of 5 millennium immediately before the Christ". The period may be divided in three phases. In phase-I dated C 5000 to 2800 B.C., there is evidence of huts with paved floors. In phase-II dated C 2800 to 600 B.C., pottery

1. Bridget and Raymond Allchin, "The Rise of Civilization in India and Pakistan", p. 54-55.
2. The Nav Bharat Times, Feb. 28, 1990.
3. Bridget And Raymond Allchin, *ibid*, p. 21.

and copper objects including three arrow heads and in phase-III dated C 600 to 200 B.C., iron tools, glass beads, brick, tiles and wheel made pottery were found. The presence of both wild and domestic animals suggest that the economy of hunters was augmented by agriculture and trading with neighbours<sup>1</sup>. The most abundant material which continued all through the occupation was the microlithic industry.

### **Copper Age**

The excavation conducted in recent years by the Department of Archaeology, Government of Rajasthan, at Ganeshwar in Sikar district has led to a startling discovery of what may be called as copper-age. The finds at Ganeshwar, situated in the catchment area of the river Kantli in Sikar district, included heaps of copper axes, arrows, needles, bangles and other objects dating back to 2800 B.C. The time period has been confirmed by carbon tests.

The pottery found in the Ganeshwar mound included bowles, dishes and handies bearing black and white paintings. The remains of the settlement there indicated that the houses were constructed with stones. Some 300 settlements were discovered in the valley of the Kantli river where the copper civilization flourished about 4800 years back. The discovery eminently fills the gap between the stone age and the Indus Valley Civilization<sup>2</sup>.

Rock paintings dating back to the Palaeolithic and Mesolithic have been discovered recently during excavations in rock sheltors and caves of Bhimji Ki Doongri, Ganesh Doongri and Bijak Ki Pahari in the Viratnagar area of Jaipur district by a team headed by Vijay Kumar of the Department of Archaeology of the Government of Rajasthan. The paintings, mostly depicting animals such as buffaloes, bears, tigers, ostriches, stags, elephants, bisons and fish, besides human figures have been done red ochre, presenting a rich panaroma of the pre-historic art<sup>3</sup>. It is interesting to note that the Viratnagar of the Mahabharat fame is the same site where a Buddhist temple had been excavated a few decades ago.

### **The Harappan Culture**

The excavations at Mohenjo-daro and Harappa by the Archaeological Survey of India (ASI) between 1920 and 1934 brought

1. Bridget and Raymond Allchin, Ibid, p. 68-72

2. Vijay Kumar - Rajasthan Ki Sanskritik Parampara, p. 11-12

3. The Hindustan Times, December 12, 1988. p.2

to light the glimpses of the great Indus<sup>1</sup> Valley Civilization which existed in the Indian sub-continent during (C 3000 BC to 1500 BC) However, with the partition of India in 1947 both the world renowned archaeological sites had gone to Pakistan. It was a Swedish lady, Dr. Hynna Rydh, who carried out excavation at Rangmahal near Suratgarh in Ganganagar district of Rajasthan in 1955-56 and gave a signal to the world that the Indus Valley Civilization, also known as the Harappan culture, extended beyond the frontiers of Pakistan<sup>2</sup>. The provocation to the lady explorer was apparently the bed of the Regvedic Saraswati which rises from the Shivalik hills and disappears in the sand in Hanumangarh<sup>3</sup>.

The A.S.I. survey followed the lead and undertook excavation in 1960s at Kalibangan situated on the left bank of Ghaggar, the ancient Saraswati. The site proved to be an archaeological gold mine. There are two mounds at Kalibangan. Amazingly a settlement of the Pre-Harappan culture was found in the lower layers of the western mound. The settlement was surrounded by a massive rampart of mud brick probably

1. The civilisation was obviously named after the river "Sindhu". The river's name was pronounced by the Greeks as 'Indus'. Hence it came to be known as 'Indus' in the West. The 'Sindhu' was pronounced by the Persians as 'Hindu'. (In Mewari and Marwari dialects too 'Sa' is pronounced as 'Ha'. For example Kapasin in pronounced as 'Kaphan' and Sadari as 'Hladari'). It is how the people living in the Indus Valley came to be known as 'Hindus'. It is interesting that the word 'Hindu' is found neither in the Vedas nor any other religious texts.
2. N.N. Godbole, Rigvedic Saraswati, p. 1.
3. Rigved VI p. 61-64. According to a UNI feature appearing in the Times of India, dated November 11, 1989, a team consisting of 28 archaeologists, geologists, geographers and historians headed by the noted archaeologist the late Dr. V.S. Wakankar began the quest for the river Saraswati in 1985. The team conducted a 3500 km survey from Adi Badri in the Shivalik Hills (Punjab) to Somnath (Gujarat). They discovered at least a part of the river flowing at the subsoil level through the Rajasthan desert. Dr. Wakankar analysing the archaeological finds, concluded that north-western Rajasthan (The Thar desert area) in the 4 to 5 millennium was a green field. In an interview published in the Hindustan Times dt. April, 20, 1990, Dr. Jagatpati Joshi, Director General of ASI, has stated that the discovery of the exquisitely curved "four member" pillar, microdrill bites of hardstone and a huge walled middle town from the ancient site of Dhola Vira in Kuccha during the recent excavations have added a new dimension to the Indus Valley Civilisation. The find, one of its own kind, is expected to throw new light on the Harappan culture. It is now well established that the Indus Valley Civilisation blanketed a vast expanse from Dher Majara in the foot hills of Shivaliks in Punjab to Kalibangan in Rajasthan and to Malisa on the estuary of the river Tapti and from Badgaon in Shaharanpur district of U.P. to Sutkajender in Nakran region in Baluchistan.

against the defence of floods, wandering hoards or animals. The houses were constructed with mud bricks of the size of 30 x 20 x 10 cms. The walls were sometimes mud plastered. Herths were found in the rooms. A feature of the material culture was a stone blade industry. Shells, bangles and beads of various materials were found. The pottery discovered at the site was red or pink with black or white painting. Among the painted motifs on the pottery were plants, fish and cattle. A remarkable find of this period was a polughed field surface with furrow marks in two directions.

Further excavations at Kalibangan led to the emergence of the Harappan settlement over pre-Indus settlement. Though there appears to be a cultural continuity between the two civilizations, the Harappan culture was basically a city culture. Like the cities of Mohenjo-daro and Harappa, both now in Pakistan, Kalibangan too consisted of two distinct elements viz., a citadel on the west and a lower city consisting of residential areas on the east. Both, the citadel and the city, were surrounded by a massive brickwall as the remains at the site indicated.

The settlement showed an advance sense of civic planning and organisation. On or beside the citadel were located the essential institutions of civic, religious life, while the general population lived in blocks in the lower town. The streets and the lanes in the town were well laid out. The burnt brick drains were provided for disposal of sullage water. The drains were covered with bricks or stone-slabs.

The size of the dwelling ranged from one roomed tenements to houses of a dozen rooms of varying sizes with courtyards. The larger houses had private wells also. Almost every house had a bath-room with sawn brick pavement. The bath-rooms were connected by a drainage channel with the main street drains. The houses were built mostly of mud bricks and often mud plastered<sup>1</sup>. The flooring of the houses was either beaten earth or sun-dried or burnt bricks. Worked stone was rarely employed in the structures. Timber was used for the roof which was flat. The extent of the drainage system and the quality of bath rooms and drains imply the existence of an effective municipal administration<sup>2</sup>.

One of the platforms on the smaller citadel mound at Kalibangan was found a row of seven fire altars, a brick lined pit containing animal-bones and antlers, a well-head and a drain. The place appears to

1. *Indian Archaeology*, 1960-61.

2. Bridget and Raymond Allchin, *Ibid* p. 176-78.

be a ritual centre where animal sacrifices, ritual bathing and the cult of sacred fire took place. Incidentally one room in every big house was reserved for fire altar. It is a feature strikingly suggestive of the 'Agni-shala' of the late Vedic and later Indian tradition. Some archaeologists attribute this phenomenon to the cultural contact between the early group of the Indo-Aryans and the Indus community<sup>1</sup>.

The excavation of cemeteries at Kalibangan revealed that the predominant burial practice was extended inhumation, the body lying on its back with head to the north. Pottery was placed in the grave. The body, some time, was buried with ornaments. A good number of graves took the form of brick chambers and cists. Regretfully for the archaeologists the number of graves found was small.

The bones of domestic as well as wild animals found at the various Harappan sites indicate that agriculture and animal husbandry played an important part in the lives of the people. The domesticated animals ranged from sheep, goat and buffallow to the Indian humped cattle. The wheat and barley found at the excavation sites show that they were the main crops. There is little doubt that the agriculture was the predominant occupation of the Harappan people. The presence of big granaries in the towns further confirms the view.

The wild animals hunted for food included sambhar, deer, spotted deer, and hog deer and various varieties of tortoise. The elephant appears to have been domesticated as it was fairly common motif on the seals. Although the bones of camel have been found at Kalibangan, the remains of the horse have not so far been traced anywhere in the Harappan settlements.

Some other important finds of the Harappan culture at Kalibangan are pottery, seals, terracotta cakes, beads and objects of copper and bronze. The pottery of the mature Indus civilization found at Kalibangan is a distinct improvement over that of the Early Indus period in that the former is more gracefully shaped. It is, however, admitted that a number of features such as internal incised decoration upon bowls and offering stands in the pottery of the early period anticipate the Harappan ware. The use of wheel kiln and firing pattern in the production of wares was common to both the periods. Similar was the case with the motifs painted on the pottery<sup>2</sup>.

1. Bridget and Raymond Allchin, 'Ibid p.183 and 217'.

2. Bridget and Raymond Allchin 'Ibid p. 158 and 197'

Like the other Harappan sites, a good number of seals made of steatite, faience and copper were found at Kalibangan. The seals are small, flat and square or rectangular each with a pictorial motif, human or animal. The animal most frequently encountered is a hampless bull with its horns pointing forward. Other animals on the seals are the elephant, the bison and the tiger. The seals carry inscription varying from one or two to a dozen or more ideograms. The script, which was written from right to the left like the Arabic, was yet to be deciphered.

The finds at Kalibangan are sufficient evidence of the presence of specialised groups of potters, brick makers, cutters, faience workers, builders and copper and bronze workers. The seals were an essential elements in the mechanism of trade. They were, perhaps, used by traders as tokens. An interesting context is established for their use in applying clay sealings to bales of merchandise<sup>1</sup>.

There is little doubt that the Harappan cities were centres of highly developed trade and commerce. The presence of elaborate granaries, each 16 m by 6 m. at these sites are proof that the cities were big grain mandies (centres). The beads of carnelian manufactured at Lothal, a Harappan site in Gujarat, and cells and bangles made in Balakot and Chanhu-daro have been found practically at all the Harappan sites in the Indian sub-continent. The various common products sold through out the Harappan region further added to the trading activity.

Apart from the local trade within the Harappan region, the area was also engaged in what may be called as international trade. Fine flints and finished flint blades were imported from Sakar (Sindh) and copper vessels and tools from Ganeshwar (Khetri) in Rajasthan<sup>2</sup>. According to Romila Thapar there was a flourishing trade between the people of Harappan culture and those of the Persian Gulf and Mesopotamia<sup>3</sup>.

The means of transport were mainly the rivers. However the discovery of the terracota bullock cart and the bones of camel at some of the Harappan sites indicated that the carts and camels were also used as surface transport.

1. Bridget and Raymond Allchin. Ibid, p. 185.

2. Recently a well known archaeologist Vijay Kumar of the Rajasthan Department of Archaeology has found copper tools and other remains belonging probably to 2800 BC during the recent excavations at Ganeshwar.

3. 'A history of India' I by Romila Thapar, page 24.

The excavations conducted by the A.S.I. at Kalibangan has conclusively proved that it was as important a city of Harappan culture as Mohanjo-daro or Harappa. A lot more will, however, be heard in future about the glory of Kalibangan as more details of excavations carried out so far and published and excavation of the smaller mound is carried out.

A major riddle, which has puzzled the archaeologists is how the phenomenon of the great Indus Valley Civilization lasting five to seven centuries came to an end ? Whether it was due to flood, earthquake or change in the course of rivers or some other natural disaster is still shrouded in mystery.

### **The Ahar Culture**

Ahar<sup>1</sup>, a small town situated on the left bank of a stream of the same name, is just 3 kms away from the walled city of Udaipur - the capital of the erstwhile historic State of Mewar.

Known as Atpur or Aghatpur in early times Ahar's reference is found in the ancient Jain texts as well as in the Sarneswar temple inscription of the tenth century A.D. A number of Shishodia rulers of Mewar have been cremated here. The artistic marble cenotaphs built in the memory of these rulers have added to the glory of the town. It, however, came on the archaeological map of India in 1952 when Dr. R.C. Agarwal, a noted archaeologist of Rajasthan, discovered an ancient civilization here.

In 1961-62 a joint team of the Deccan College Pune, the Rajasthan Department of Archaeology and Museums and the Melbourne University of Australia conducted an extensive excavation at Ahar under the supervision of Prof. H.D. Sankalia. Later 50 sites of this settlement were also discovered in the region. The civilization brought to light as a result of these efforts was named as 'Ahar culture'. It was also called as "Banas-culture" after the river of this name. The survey confirmed that the culture was spread over south-eastern Rajasthan along the Banas and the Chambal. Radio-carbon dates indicated that the civilisation lasted from C 2580 to 1500 BC.

The dimension of the Dhoolkot mound at Ahar excavated was 1600 x 500 x 50 feet. The excavations resulted in the discovery of a large sized village settlement and a number of articles of archaeological importance. The houses were ablong. One of them measured 30 by 15 feet. The walls were built of stone and mud or mud brick or wattle and

1. Ahar is also spelled as Ahad or Ayad.



daub. The roofs were flat and made of bamboo and matting and covered with earth or thatch. The floors were made of black soil mixed with yellow soil. Each house had a kitchen having an oven made of mud. Interestingly the houses of this type are still found in the vicinity of Ahar in spite of urbanisation of the area in recent years.<sup>1</sup>

The heaps of semi fused objects of copper-slag along with copper tools found at Ahar indicate that it was a copper smelting centre. This was due, perhaps, to the fact that there were extensive copper deposits in the nearby Aravalli hills. Since there was large scale use of copper the Ahar culture is some time called the "Copper Age Civilization" and Ahar town itself as Tambawati<sup>2</sup>.

The Ahar culture produced pottery of as many as seven types, the most important among them being the black and red ware with white painted decoration. An important ware was a cream-slipped pottery with black painted decoration. The 'dish on stand' was the most popular article in the pottery of the various phases of the culture. The wares also included deep bow, lotha, basin, storage jar, high beaked jar, lids and pots with handles<sup>3</sup>. The other finds of the Ahar culture are terracotta cakes such as human figurines, humped cattle, horse, elephant, bangles, skin rubber, ear stud etc. and copper objects like ring, bangle, knife, axe etc.

The bones of animals, domesticated as well as wild, found at Dhoolkot show that the inhabitants of the settlement were engaged in agriculture and animal husbandary. The discovery of the bones of fish and tortoise candidly confirm that they were doing fishing in the nearby stream. Among the cultivated grains were rice, sorghum and millet. Though the settlements of the Ahar culture were occupied during the life time of the Indus civilization, the two civilizations had little in common. The former was rural biased while the latter was urban. The Ahar pottery had more variety but was less sophisticated in comparison to the Indus pottery. The Indus community had their script, the Ahar people had none. In art as well as in civic affairs the Indus community appears to be far ahead of the Ahar community. Nevertheless it can not be denied that the Ahar culture too played a significant role in the development of the later Indian civilization.

1. Dr. S.P. Gupta, 'Bhartiya Puratatva Ke Mool Tatva' p. 1-13.

2. Dr. S.P. Gupta, Ibid, p. 3.

3. Dr. S.P. Gupta, Ibid p. 4.

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## CHAPTER 4

# THE INDO - ARYANS

As we have seen earlier, the Harappa culture had a highly developed socio-economic system. Apart from agriculture and animal husbandry, the people were engaged in trade between the settlements as well as with the neighbouring countries. The painted pottery, the motifs on the seals, the copper and the terracotta objects found in excavations at Kalibangan (Ganganagar) clearly indicate that the people had attained high degree of sophistication. The roads, the drainage system and the houses with bathrooms and pooja rooms attached thereto show that the people were well acquainted with the principles of town-planning. They had a script of their own as indicated in the seals, though it has yet to be deciphered. The end of the Harappa culture around 1500 BC due to some or the other natural disaster put the clock of the social, cultural and economic development of the region back by quite a few centuries. Similar fate met the regions where once the Bagor, Ahar and Ganewar civilisations had flourished.

The Indo-Aryans (Aryans in short) who entered into India from the north west in about 1500 B.C., had to start all over again. They were semi-nomadic and lived on cattle rearing. The cow was the measure of value. Gradually they took to agriculture by clearing the jungles. The introduction of iron in about 1000 B.C., facilitated their task in this regard. In course of time the tribal units of the Aryans disintegrated and with that the institution of private property came into being. The people produced wheat, barley and cotton in their fields.

The development of agriculture brought in its wake a wide range of occupations such as carpentry, smithy, pottery, tannery and weaving. The wealthy land owners became traders. Barter was the common practice. The cow continued to be the unit of value. The rivers were used as trade high ways and the settlements on their banks acted as markets.

Originally the Aryans were divided into three social classes, namely, the warriors, the priests and the common people. The divisions merely facilitated social and economic organisations. The caste consciousness started only when the Aryans started treating the Dasas, the indigenous people, as Shudras perhaps due to the colour of their skin which was dark. Henceforth the society was divided into four varanas (castes) i.e. the Kshatriyas, the Brahmins, the Vaishyas and the Shudras. The first three castes were "Dwijas" - the twice born and the fourth consisted of Dashas - the modern scheduled castes. The Shudras were allowed to cultivate land but debarred from participating in the Vedic rituals which were confined to the Dwijas.

At earlier stages there was freedom amongst the Dwijas to change professions and hence the castes. The inter-caste marriages were a normal feature among the Dwija castes. As time passed by, the caste system became hereditary and rigid and the occupations now went with castes and even sub-castes.

The Aryans put on simple clothes. Their ornaments were, however, elaborate. Singing, dancing and gambling were their hobbies. The horse and the chariot were their proud possessions. The diet of the Aryans consisted of milk, ghee, vegetables, fruits and barley. They ate meat and drank "Sura" and "Soma". Animal sacrifice was resorted to propitiate the gods.

The historical reconstruction of the Aryan life is based on the Rig Veda - the earliest literary source. Parts of the Rigveda were composed prior to 1300 B.C. while the remaining Vedic literature was of much later dates. The political organisations in the form of republics or monarchies came into being in 600 B.C. The republics had emerged from the Vedic tribes and therefore retained their tribal traditions. In monarchies the caste loyalties dominated. The political power lay with the Kshatriyas and hence their ascendancy over Brahmins in the caste hierarchy.

The excavations conducted by the Department of Archeology, Government of Rajasthan under the supervision of R.C. Agarwal and Vijay Kumar at Noh (Bharatpur), Jodhpura (Jaipur), Viratnagar (Jaipur) and Sunari (Jhunjhunu) in 1970s confirm that there had been Aryan settlements in these areas before 1000/- B.C. The painted Grey Ware

which is associated with the Indo-Aryans, has been found in the region. The pottery discovered includes cups, jars and dishes with black painted decoration. Also found at these sites are iron objects like arrows and spears and a cup made of iron. It is well known that there are rich deposits of iron ores in the area. The discoveries of a large number of indigenous furnaces used for manufacture of iron objects in the above localities indicate that the agriculture communities in that period were familiar in the use of iron. It has, however, yet to be established whether there was continuity between the Geneshwar community of the Copper age and the Indo-Aryans living in the area around 1500 B.C.<sup>1</sup>

The great epics, the Ramayana and the Mahabharata, contain reference to places and events in Rajasthan. The epics are concerned with period between 1000 to 700 B.C.<sup>2</sup> They were written some times between 600 B.C. to 500 B.C. The Ramayana refers to Pushkar as a place where Viswamitra performed the "tap" and the Apsara Menaka had her bath in the sacred water of the Pushkar lake<sup>3</sup>.

1 Vijay Kumar. 'Puratatva' Rajasthan-Ki-Sanskritak Parampara, p. 16-17

2 Traditionally the Ramayana period (Treta Yug) is considered earlier than the Mahabharata period (Dwapar Yug). The traditionalists base their theory on the fact that the Mahabharata contains reference to Ramayana and its author Valmiki, though there is a section among them who emphasize that the Ramayana period and the Mahabharata period both fell in Dwapar Yug. The two well-known modern historians, Dr. D.C. Sarkar and Romila Thapar, however, hold that the events refer to in the Mahabharata took place earlier than those refer to in the Ramayana. An argument given by Romila Thapar in favour of her theory is that the approximate date of the Mahabharata war (Kurushketra war) was 900 B.C., whereas the southward movements of the Aryans took place somewhere in 800 B.C. In the circumstances the Rama-Ravana war must have taken place much later than the Kurushketra war (See Romila Thapar's, "A History of India," Vol.I, p.31-33). We are inclined to agree with Romila Thapar, if only because the civilisation during the Ramayana period had attained a high degree of perfection as compared to the one attained during the Mahabharata period. In the Mahabharata period, the social structure in India was rather primitive. For example, polyandry, children born of unmarried woman and widows and public gambling in its naked form even in the highest strata of the society were acceptable norms in the Mahabharata period. In the Ramayana period the Indian civilisation had reached its peak. In Rama we find a character who maintained the highest standards of public behaviour and had become a demi-god in his own life time. We have Sita who became the ideal of the Indian womanhood and came to be worshipped as a goddess. This improvement in the Indian society must have come after the shocking events of the Mahabharata period.

3. Balmiki Ramayan, Sarga 63, Shloka<sup>1</sup>

During the Mahabharat period the Bikaner region, then known as 'Jangal Desh', was part of the 'Kuru-Rajya'. A reference to this effect occurs in chapter 9 and 10 of the Bhism Parva of the Mahabharata. In the same epic Yudhisthara has been advised to go to Pushkar and take bath in the sacred lake.<sup>1</sup> The Mahabharata contains reference to Matsyas whose territory comprised the present Jaipur, Alwar and Bharatpur region. The Matsyas, a Vedic tribe, had sided with the Pandawas in the famous Kaurva-Pandawa battle at Hastinapur. The capital of the kingdom was at Viratnagar<sup>2</sup> now known as Bairath in Jaipur district.

According to the Mahabharata a certain king Shrutayudha in a region situated on the river Banas (Mewar) fought for the Kauravas. The epic also refers to 'Madhyamika' in various contexts. The city was situated a few kms. away from Chittorgarh. It is now almost a village and known as 'Nagari'. The tank Bhim- gori situated on Chittor fort is supposed to have been constructed by Bhim, one of the heroes of the Mahabharata.

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1. Harbilas Sarda, Ajmer : Historical and Descriptive, p. 136

2. Mahabharata V. 160-21.

## CHAPTER 5

# JAINISM AND BUDDHISM

With the commencement of the age of Mahavira and Buddha, India had entered into what is technically called the historical era. Both Mahavira and Buddha were contemporaries. Mahavira was born at Kundgram in Munger district of Bihar in 599 B.C. and died in 527 B.C. at the age of 72. He was the last Jain Teerthankar (Liberated soul). Gautam Buddha was born at Lumbini in Kapilvastu in 585 B.C. and died in 505 B.C.<sup>1</sup> at the age of 80. He was the founder of Buddhism.

Although Mahavira and Buddha differed on certain fundamentals, there were many things common in the teachings of both. Both were opposed to the Brahminical orthodoxy and denied the authority of the Vedas. Both were antagonistic to animal sacrifice and both appealed to the socially downtrodden. Both the religions were non-caste movements and both had introduced women in their monastic order unlike the practice in other cults in the Hindu society. The two religions thus made a frontal attack on the later Vedic traditions which had turned the society into a citadel of conservatism.

Mahavira put greater emphasis on "Ahimsa" (non-violence) than Buddha. The result was that Jainism was restricted mainly to the mercantile community. It could make little headway amongst the artisan and agriculturist classes as farming operations involved killing insects and pests. On the other hand with his liberal attitude towards non-violence and use of the popular Magadhi language in his discourses, Buddha could reach the common people and particularly those belonging to the lower strata of the society. Surprisingly both the religions had sizeable following among the warrior-class known as 'Kshtriya'.

1 Acharya Hastimal—"Jain Dharam Ka Maulik Itihas" Part I p. 552-53. The age-long controversy over the dates of birth and death of Mahavira and Buddha should end now in the light of the masterly analysis on the subject by the Acharya in the above book.

## **Buddhism**

Although Buddhism had spread far and wide in the next few centuries and specially during the reign of Ashoka the Great (272-232 B.C.), it does not appear to have made significant inroads in Rajasthan. According to the archaeological and literary evidence available so far, the influence of Buddhism in Rajasthan was restricted to Pushkar, the kingdom of Matsya and Vinayaga and Kholbe in Jhalawar district.

The stone inscriptions of the second century B.C. in the Buddhist Stupa at Sanchi (M.P.) indicate that Pushkar was a strong hold of Buddhism during the period. The inscriptions mention that Bhikshu (Buddhist-monk) Arhadina Nagaraksita, Arya Buddraksita, Himgiri, Pusak and a woman Isidata from Pushkar made charitable donations<sup>1</sup>.

The Matsya kingdom with Viratnagar (Bairat) as its capital was ruled by a Kshatriya tribe during the Vedic age. It was prosperous and rich in the wealth of cows. The ruling Matsya family was highly respected for purity of their culture and regarded as the most orthodox followers of Brahmanism<sup>2</sup>. The thriving kingdom became part of Ashoka's empire and thus came under the influence of Buddhism as the Bairat (Bhabru) stone inscription<sup>3</sup> and the Bairat minor rock inscription<sup>4</sup> indicated. With the disintegration of the Maurayan empire by 180 B.C., the pockets of influence of Buddhism in Rajasthan gradually vanished. Not so was the case with Jainism.

## **Jainism**

The founder of Jainism was Rishabh Deo, the first Tceerthankar. According to the Jain traditions he was the son of Nabhi Rai and Maru Devi. He had 98 sons and 2 daughters. It was after his eldest son Bharat, the all powerful emperor, that the country was named Bharat Khand or Bharat. It is claimed that Rishabh Deo had founded the institution of monarchy as well as marriage and was responsible for the origin of the caste system. He introduced agriculture and several other arts and founded a script named after his daughter Brahmi. In short Rishabh Deo is supposed to have accomplished all that is attributed to Manu of the "Purana" fame. Or is it that Rishabh Deo and Manu were one and the same person ?

1. Harbilas Sarda, *Ajmer : Historical & Descriptive* (1911), p.136.

2. D.C. Shukla, *Early History of Rajasthan*, page 89.

3. Shri Ram Goyal, *Pracheen Bhartiya Abhilekh Sangrah*, p. 89.

4. R.B. Panday, *Ashok ke Abilekh*, p. 114.

Rishabh Deo was followed by 23 other Teerthankars. They spread the message of love, truth, non-violence and self renunciation through-out the length and breadth of the country. A lot has been said about the lives and attainments of these Teerthankars from the pre-historic times to this day. And yet the historicity of the first twenty one Teerthankars has still to be established. The reason is that even the modern Jain literature on the Teerthankars contains more mythology than history. In this scientific age the reader has to be satisfied as to how a Teerthankar in his mortal frame attained the age of millions of years ? The Jain scholars should rewrite Jain history in a manner that it would stand the test of time and become part of the great Indian civilisation without, of course, compromising with the basic tenets of Jainism.

The three Teerthankars whom scholars accept as historical persons are Arishtnemi, Paraswanath and Mahavira. Arishtnemi was a distant cousin of Lord Krishna not only according to the Jain texts but also according to the Puranic literature<sup>1</sup>.

The twenty third Teerthankar Paraswanath was born in the eighth century B.C. Even western scholars like Dr. Harnam Jacob Farlong, Dr. Sharpanter etc. now accept him as a historical person. He visited Nepal, Kuru, Kashi, Kalinga, Kashmir, Karnataka and Mewar to spread the message of Jainism<sup>2</sup>.

The various Jain Teerthankars made invaluable contribution to the Indian thought and culture. It was, however, during the period of Mahavira that Jainism made a deep impact on the Indian society. There is a reference to Mahavira's visit to Bheenmal and Arbud in Rajasthan in the stone inscriptions found at Bheenmal and Mungsthal. These inscriptions belong to the 13th and 14th century A.D. Not much reliance could be placed on them as regards the visits of Mahavira, as the visits were supposed to have taken place 1800 to 1900 years before the inscriptions were engraved. Besides, the Jain texts, which have recorded the various movements of Mahavira in detail, are silent about these visits. However, a few decades after Mahavira's 'nirvan' Rajasthan became an important centre of Jainism through the efforts of some eminent Jain monks.

1. Harivansh Puran, Parva I, Chapter 34.

2. Acharya Hastimalji—ibid, page 281, 282, 283 and 302.



## CHAPTER 6

# EMERGENCE OF NEW COMMUNITIES

### Shrimals

According to the ancient Jain literary sources Acharya Swayamprabh Suri, the fifth 'pattdhar' of the 23rd Teerthankar Parswanath, visited Shrimal town<sup>1</sup> later on known as Bhinmal, some time in 497 B.C. where Ashvamedh Yagna was being organised and thousands of animals were waiting to be scarified. The Acharya, accompanied by his disciples, went to meet the local ruler, Raja Jaisen, at his place where he was finalising the details of the Yagna ceremony with his ministers and courtiers. The Acharya explained to Jaisen the doctrine of non-violence and pleaded for the lives of the animals. Jaisen was so much impressed with the Acharya and the Jain philosophy that he not only abandoned the holding of the Ashvamedh yagna but also courted Jainism. His subjects, relations and ministers followed suit. It is said that 90,000 people of Shrimal became Jains on the occasion<sup>2</sup>

According to the Upkesh Gachh Pattawali, Bhim Sen succeeded Jaisen as ruler of Shrimal. He was a fanatic Shaivite and was under the influence of Brahmins. A large number of the inhabitants of the kingdom, who had embarrassed Jainism during his father's regime, had to migrate to other parts of Rajasthan and the neighbouring Gujarat towns. They were called as Shrimals after the name of their original home 'Shrimal'. Meanwhile Bhimsen changed the name of Shrimal to Bhinmal to associate his name with the town.

### Porwals

A little later a similar event took place at Padamavati (Sirohi). Acharya Swayamprabh reached there in time and successfully persuaded Padam Sen, the ruler of Padmavati, to give up the holding of 'Yagna'.

1 The town is situated in Jalore district of Rajasthan.

2. Muni Gyan Sundar, 'Jain Jati Mahodaya' I. p. 27-28.

The lives of thousands of animals were saved. The ruler and 45000 of his Pragwat Brahmin subjects embarrassed Jainism. The Pragwats were later on called 'Porwals'. According, however, to 'Shrimat Mahatmya' the Pragwats too had their origin from Shrimat (Bhinmal). Those who lived in the eastern part of the town were designated as 'Pragwats while those living in the western and southern parts as Shrimats by Acharya Swayamprabh Suri. To us, however, the legend that origin of Pragwats was from Padmawati appears more plausible as Padmavati was the capital of the region known as Pragwat in ancient times<sup>1</sup>. Be that as it may, the Porwal community had commanded vast influence and produced generals and administrators in Gujarat and else where during the mediaval period. The world famous Jain temples at Dilwara (Abu) and Rankpur were constructed by Porwals. Lunkashah, founder of the "Sthanakvasi" Jain sect was a Porwal.

### **Oswals**

Acharya Ratnaprabh Suri succeeded Acharya Swayamprabh Suri. During the period of the new Acharya, Upal Deo alias Utpal Kumar, grand son of Raja Bhimsen of Bhinmal got estranged with his father Shri Punj. He left Bhinmal along with his followers to seek greener pastures elsewhere. He founded a new town of Osian<sup>2</sup> or Upkeshnagar and settled there.

In 457 B.C. Acharya Ratnaprabh accompanied by 500 monks came to Osian. There were no Jains in the town. The ruler Upal Deo and the people of the town, who were all Shaivites, ignored the presence of the Acharya and his entourage. The monks found it difficult even to get 'ahar' (food). Undeterred the Acharya along with his 35 disciples decided to observe 'Chaturmas'<sup>3</sup> at Osian. The rest of the monks left the place to hold 'Chaturmas' elsewhere.

As luck would have it. Trilokya Singh, son-in-law of Upal Deo, had a severe snake bite. The various treatments given to him failed and it appeared as if all was lost. At this critical moment Upal Deo, on some boy's suggestion, invited the Acharya to do his bit to save his son-in-law from the jaws of death. And lo ! a mere touch by the Acharya brought the young prince to life again. There were all round jubiliations and talk

1. Muni Gyan Sundar, 'Jain Jati Mahodaya' I p. 29-37.

2. The town is situated in Jodhpur district.

3. The Jain monks stay at one place during the entire period of four months of the rainy season.

about the miracle performed by the Acharya. The grateful prince Upal Deo and his family embarrassed Jainism. His subjects followed suit. The neo-Jains, when migrated to other places in course of time, were called 'Oswals' after their native place of Osian. Today there are thousands of Oswal families in Rajasthan and elsewhere still following the Jain religion. The community had dominated the political scene for centuries in various princely states of Rajputana prior to the independence of India.

### **Khandelwals**

The fourth Jain community to be born before the advent of the Christian era was that of Khandelwals, also known as Saravagis. It claimed its origin from Khandela now a town in Sikar district. It is said that Khandelgiri, a local Chief, ruled over Khandela some time in the first century B.C. The town was centre of Jainism and had 900 Jain temples. As the story goes an epidemic (plague) broke out in the town taking heavy toll every day. The ruler summoned the local priests and asked them as to how this calamity could be warded off. The priests explained that it was a nemesis sent by gods to punish the people and that a 'narmedh yagna' would have to be held to propitiate the gods. The ruler expressed his inability to hold any yagna involving human sacrifice. The priests and their supporters, however, decided to hold the yagna on their own. Some 5000 Jain monks visited Khandela at this point of time and stayed in a park outside the town. While the monks were engaged in meditation one evening, the priests whisked away one hundred and one of them and scarified them in the yagna. The plague in the town, however, continued to take its toll unabated.

When Acharya Jainen heard about the dastardly act of the priests, he rushed to the town to give solace to the monks. He advised the residents of Khandela to vacate the town and stay outside it during the epidemic. His Jain followers acted accordingly but the ruler and the non-Jains preferred to stay inside the town. One day the ruler himself caught infection and fell seriously ill. He was taken to the Acharya, who advised him to stay outside the town till the termination of the deadly epidemic. The ruler carried out the Acharya's instructions and survived the illness.

The grateful ruler held a durbar in honour of the Acharya and his fellow monks and embarrassed Jainism with all the fan fare. His relatives, samants and subjects followed suit. It is claimed that as many as 3 lakhs of people courted Jainism during the reign of Khandelgiri. These Jains

and their decedents migrated from Khandela to other parts of the country and were known as Khandelwals after their home town Khandela. From this town also came the non-Jain Khandelwal Vaishyas and the Khandelwal Brahmins.

### **Maheshwaries**

Apart from the four Jain communities, the well known Vaishya community of Maheshwaries also claims its origin from Rajasthan. According to a legend the ancestors of the community were Chauhan Rajputs. They were feudatories to Raja Khadgal Sen of Khandela (Sikar district) who is supposed to have ruled in the 4th centry B.C. The feudatories were 72 in number and were called "Umaraos" who were originally Buddhists. It is said that they embarrassed Shavism at the instance of the mythological god Shiva himself. Simultaneously they left the Kshtriya community and became Vaishyas and hence vegetarian. Mahesh is another name of god Shiva. The Umaraos, therefore, adopted 'Maheshwari' as the nomenclature of their newly formed community. The Maheshwaries all over the country are supposed to be the decedents of the 72 Umaraos. There were originally 72 "Khamps" or sub-castes in the community accordingly.

The other legend about the origin of the Maheshwaries is that the community came into being with the emergence of the great Shankaracharya in the eighth centry A.D. It was the period when Buddhism and Jainism had flourished in most part of the country. In Rajasthan Buddhism had a few pockets of influence but Jainism had spread all over the region.

Shankaracharya, who was born in Kaladi in Kerala (731-820 AD), was a genius and one of the greatest religious thinkers of those times. He travelled throughout the length and breadth of the country, preached 'Advaita' and revived Shivism with full glory at the cost of Jainism and Buddhism. If Jainism was saved in Rajasthan, the reason was that the great saint did not pass through the region. Nevertheless the countrywide Shaivite revolution had its vibrations in Rajasthan too. Consequently a section of Jains along with people from other communities became followers of Lord Shiva and styled themselves as "Maheshwaris" or the worshippers of Mahesh, the other name of Shiva.

If legends are to be believed, then the second legend appears more reliable. It is supported by the fact that the living habits and various social customs amongst the Maheshwaries are the same as prevalent amongst the various Jain communities. The Jains and Maheshwaris are

traditionally vegetarians and teetotaler and believe in non-violence. No one can distinguish one from the other except on the basis of religion. There are several sub-castes which are common amongst the Jains and Maheshwaris. As religions take back seat in course of time, the two communities may assimilate along with other Vaishya communities to emerge as a single powerful force. The inter-caste marriages amongst the various Vaishya communities are no more a taboo.

A major branch of Maheshwaris was called 'Didu' Maheshwaris, probably because they originated from Deedwana. This further supports the theory that they were mostly converts from Jains whose original home was Maru-desh (Marwar). The other Maheshwari sects known as Khandelwal, Meratwals, Pokaras etc. were considered inferior. There were no inter marrying or even inter-dinning between them and the Didu Maheshwaris for hundred of years. The distinction has gradually disappeared with the spread of education in the community.

**NOTE :**

The account relating to the origin of the three Jain communities namely, Oswal, Shrimal and Porwal is based mostly on Pattawalis and other Jain literature of the mediaval period. No archaeological or contemporary literary evidence is available so far to support it. There is, however, no reason to disbelieve the Pattawalis which give systematic accounts of the various pattdhars and related events. The 23rd Teerthankar, Parswanath has been accepted as a historical person. He belonged to the 8th century B.C.. According to the Upkesh Gachh Pattawali and the Upkesh Gachh Charitra, Acharya Ratanprabh Suri was the sixth pattdhar of Paraswnath. The period of the Acharya could therefore, be taken as fifth century B.C. Consequently the date of origin of Oswals as 457 B.C. or Veer Samvat 70 as stated in Pattawalis appears to be in order. We are fortified in this view by the well known Oswal historian, M.L. Bhootodiya (Itihas-ki-Amarbel, 'Oswal', p. 171.)

Bhinml (Shrimal) and Osian are ancient towns of Rajasthan. If the Archaeological Survey of India and the Rajasthan Archaeology Department could undertake survey and excavations at these sites, they are likely to be richly rewarded. The Jains, who are a prosperous community, could finance such projects and help discover their rich cultural heritage which is still in the realm of mythology.

The account about the origin of Khandelwal community (Shrawagis) is based on Dr. K.C. Kashliwal's book 'Khandelwal Jain Samaj-ka- Varhad Itihas'. The author has quoted numerous old manuscripts in support of his theory.

As regards the Maheshwari community, the story is based on the information collected from Jagas (chroniclers of Maheshwaris) by some Maheshwari friends and certain publications including the "Kalpdrum Maheshwari Kul Shudh Darpana" by Shri Jagdeesh Chandra Darak of Bhilwara.

We may submit that though all the 5 communities referred to in this chapter had their origin in Rajasthan, the conclusion reached here in regard to the dates and places of their origin are tentative. Archaeological studies and further research will be needed to come to firm conclusions in this regard.

It appears that upto the 18th century A.D. the business activity of the Maheshwaris was restricted more or less to the Rajputana region. With the development of communications and improvement in the security environment on the high-ways, a number of young Maheshwaris specially from the Thali and the Shekhawati regions left their native places to seek greener pastures in other parts of the country. In a short period, they established themselves in trade in presidency towns like Bombay and Calcutta. The more adventurers among them, such as Birlas, Bangaurs, Mohtas, Malpanis, Dagas etc. entered into the field of industry and made a name for themselves. Today they could be match in trade and industry with any mercantile community in India.

## CHAPTER 7

# RAJASTHAN IN POST BUDDHA-PERIOD

### Mauryan Empire

Except for the emergence of some new communities no major event in Rajasthan has come to light during the post Buddha period. The kingdom of Matsya, which came into the lime light during the Epic age and which was one of the 16 major states of northern India in 600 B.C., seems to have gone into oblivion. It is not known if it became part of the Magadha empire during the rule of Ajatshatru (493-461 B.C.) or that of Nandas (321 B.C.). There is, however, little doubt that it was an integral part of the Mauryan empire during 321-185 B.C. Chandra Gupta Maurya, the founder of the Mauryan dynasty, started consolidating the central authority in India and Ashoka did the rest. Two stone inscriptions viz. the Bhabru inscription<sup>1</sup> and the minor rock inscription<sup>2</sup> found at Bairat in Jaipur district confirmed that the Matsya and possibly a major part of Rajasthan region, was part of the Mauryan empire.

### Brahmi script

It has been emphasized that India had no knowledge of any script prior to Ashoka the Great (272-232 B.C.) and that the Brahmi script came into being only during the Mauryan era<sup>3</sup>. A stone inscription in Brahmi was discovered by the well known historian G.H. Ojha in 1912 at Barli in Ajmer district. According to Ojha the inscription is dated Veer Samvat 84 i.e. 443 B.C. His view is based on the words 'Veer' and '80 + 4' used in the inscription. Some historians assign it a later date but most of them are agreed that it belongs to the pre- Mauryan period<sup>4</sup>. There should, therefore, be no doubt that the Brahmi script was in vogue prior to the

1. Dr. S.R. Goyal, *Prachin Bharat Abhilekh Sangrah*, p. 89

2. R.B. Pandey, *Ibid*, p. 114.

3. Dr. S.R. Goyal, *Ibid*, p.18-19.

4. R.V. Somani, *Jain Inscriptions of Rajasthan*, p.246-251.

establishment of the Mauryan empire. The Barli inscription also indicates that Jainism had spread to the Ajmer region long before the dawn of Christian era.

### **Madhyamika**

Madhyamika, now known as Nagri near Chittorgarh, was a town which had remained consistently in focus from the Epic age to the second century B.C. It has been mentioned in Mahabharat in connection with the conquest of Nakula over the Vatadhanas<sup>1</sup>. A large number of punch-marked coins assignable to 5th century B.C. have been found at the site of Madhyamika<sup>2</sup>. It's reference in the Barli inscription indicates that it was a Jain centre as early as 5th century B.C. According to Patanjali's 'Mahabhashya', the Greeks had invaded Madhyamika in the second century B.C. as the words 'Arunyad Yavano Madhyamika' indicate. It appears that soon after the Greek invasion, the Shibis, who had migrated from Punjab, occupied Madhyamika. A number of coins bearing the legend "Madhyamika Shivi Janpada" found at Madhyamika proves that it was the capital of the Shivi Janpada during the second century B.C.<sup>3</sup>

The Hathibada inscription of the first century B.C. found at Ghosundi near Chittorgarh refers to the holding of Ashavamedh yagna by a certain king Sarvatata<sup>4</sup>. Though little is known about this king, he must have been quite an important ruler of the region as Ashavamedh yagna was performed only by sovereign and powerful rulers. The inscription also throws light on the evolution of 'Vaishnavism' in the area dominated by Jains.

### **Vedic tribes**

During the Sunga-Kanva period (180 to 28 B.C.) a number of Vedic tribes had controlled some or the other part of Rajasthan. The Johiyas (Yaudheyas), a warrior tribe, had settled in northern part of Rajasthan. They claimed descent from Yudhisthar, the eldest of the Pandawa brothers and had migrated from Punjab. They worshipped the war-lord Kumar Kartikya. In later centuries they courted Islam. When Rao Bika, the founder of the Rathor principality of Bikaner, marched towards Jangal Desh to establish his rule, he had to encounter stiff

1. Dr. D.C. Shukla, *Early History of Rajasthan*, p.29.

2. *Archaeological Survey of India, Report VI*, p.197

3. *Archaeological Survey of India, Volume VI*, p.107

4. Dr. S.R. Goyal. *Ibid*, p. 173.



opposition from the Johiyas<sup>1</sup>. The Johiya Muslims are still found in the area of former Bikaner State.

The Arjunayanas, who claimed decent from the Mahabharat hero Arjun, had occupied the area of former Alwar and Bharatpur states. The coins found in the region bear the legend 'Arjunayanam Jayah' in early Brahmi script and confirm their rule in the area during the Sunga-Kanva period<sup>2</sup>. Coins, bearing the legend 'Rajna Janpadas' of the second and first century B.C. and found in the area<sup>3</sup> lying between Bharatpur and Mathura, prove that Rajanyas had a sway over the area.

The Malavas (Malloi) was another warrior tribe which migrated from Punjab to Rajasthan. They were considered to be the most civilised of all the tribes migrated from Punjab during the second century B.C. The Malavai coins found at Nagai and Rairh in Tonk district and elsewhere indicate that the tribe had settled down in the Ajmer-Tonk region. Bhumaka and his successor Nahapana of the Saka-Kshatrapa dynasty of western India defeated the Malavas in the first century A.D. Rudradaman I of another Kshatrapa branch of Ujjain defeated not only the Malavas but also conquered Maru Desh in the middle of the second century A.D.<sup>4</sup> The Malavas, however, succeeded in establishing their authority over the area after some time. The Nandasa inscription<sup>5</sup> indicate that they were in full command of the area upto 225 A.D.

Most of the tribes, which migrated from Punjab, thrived in Rajasthan for about 5 centuries as independent republics despite the set-backs suffered by them from time to time at the hands of the Sakas and Kushans. At least nine of them including the Malavas and the Yaudheyas were, however, subjugated by the great King Samudragupta of the imperial Gupta dynasty in the middle of the fourth century A.D.<sup>6</sup> The tribal leaders were compelled to pay taxes, carry out imperial commands and render personal homage to the emperor according to the Prayag prashasti<sup>7</sup>. They were thus reduced to the status of samantas. The coins of Chandragupta I, Samudragupta, Chandragupta II and

G.S. Ojha, *Bikaner Rajya Ka Itihas*, Vol.1, p.69-70.

D.C. Shukla, *Ibid*, p. 31-32.

Allan-Catalogue of the coins of ancient India in the British Museum, p. 141.

Junagarh inscription— 'Pracheen Bharatiya Abhilekh Sangarh' by Dr. S.R. Goyal, p. 320-48.

S.R. Goyal, *Ibid*, p. 320-348.

Romila Thapan, *History of India I*, p.157.

J.F. Fleet-Inscriptions of early Gupta Kings and their successors. p.8.

Kumargupta I, found in various parts of Rajasthan establish that Guptas had theirs away over Rajasthan till the middle of the fifth century A.D. In the meanwhile the tribal republics of the region lost their political identity and became part of the socio-political system of the Gupta empire. The scholars generally give credit for this achievement to Chandragupta II.

### **The Hunas**

It was during the middle of the fifth century A.D. that the Hunas, a ferocious tribe of Central Asia, threatened the Gupta empire. The menace lasted for about a century. Kumar Gupta and Skand Gupta repulsed several Huna attacks. However, after the death of Skand Gupta the central authority of the Guptas declined. The Hunas had a major break through into northern India at the end of the fifth century. The Huna king Toramana established his hegemony over northern India. It was not until 542 A.D. that through the combined efforts of the Guptas and other rulers that the Huna menace came to an end. The Huna king Mihirkula was driven out of the plains and into Kashmir where he died.

Though Rajasthan did not suffer as much as other parts of northern India at the hands of Hunas, it had its own ups and downs. As the Gupta empire weakened, the Aulikara branch of the Malava tribe established itself at Dasapura (Malapura) and founded an independent kingdom. In course of time it acquired hold over practically whole of Rajasthan. The Dasapura dynasty, also known as Vardhan-dynasty, produced heroes like Vishnuvardhana who dazzled the Huna King Mihirkula with his sword and stopped the latter's advance beyond Chitrakuta (Chittorgarh) as the various stone inscriptions found at Mandsaur, Chittor and Chohoti Sadari indicated<sup>1</sup>. Some skirmishes with Hunas appear to have taken place in Kota region also<sup>2</sup>. Be that as it may, the discovery of Huna coins in various parts of Rajasthan proves that Hunas had some sway over Rajasthan till they were finally packed off in the middle of the sixth century A.D.

1. D.C. Shukla, *Ibid*, page 117-128.

2. Dasharatha Sharma, *Rajasthan through the Ages*, p.61.

## CHAPTER 8

# THE KSHATRIYA KINGDOMS (550 A.D. to 1192 A.D.)

The Gupta empire, which started cracking during the reign of Skand Gupta (445-467 AD), finally disintegrated by 550 AD and a number of kingdoms arose over its ashes. The more important among them were the Later Guptas of Magadha, the Maukharis of Kannauj, the Pushyabhutis of Thaneswar and Maitrakas of Vallabhi in the north and the Chalukyas of Badami, the Pallavas of Kanchipuram and the Pandyas of Madurai in the south.

Among the north Indian kingdoms the Pushyabhutis emerged a leading power under Harsha (Harshavardhana) who succeeded the throne of Thaneswar in 606 AD. The kings of Magadha, Kannauj and Vallabhi as also Jalandhar, Kashmir and Nepal paid homage to Thaneswar. Harsha thus had his sway practically over whole of northern India. His empire, however, collapsed soon after his death in 647 A.D. Some historians claim that Harsha had some sway in Rajasthan, though there is no direct evidence to prove it.

Prior to the founding of the various Kshatriya dynasties, Rajasthan was the home of numerous Janpads (petty republics) of various communities. The Bhils, Grasias and Meenas were in control of Medpat (Mewar) and Vagad regions before the advent of Guhils. The Kachhavas founded their dynasty in Dhundhar after destroying scores of Janpads of Meenas and Badgujars. Jaisalmer, the heart of the Great Thar, was inhabited by Varah, Bhutta, Langa, Channa and Lodara Rajputs before Bhatias from Salbhanpur destroyed their petty principalities and established their rule in this inhospitable region. In Marwar the Balecha-Chauhans, Gohils and Mohils had their sway until a scion of the Rathor family of Kannauj entered the area to seek his fortune. In Janglu (Bikaner), Rathor Bika swept away the Janpads of Jats, Johiyas, Bhatias, Khichis and Chayals and established his dynastic rule. The Hadas

founded their state after destroying the Meena Janpads in Bandu Ghati and Bhil Janpads in Kota region. The Sinsinwar Jats established their dynasty in Jatwara (Bharatpur) after liquidating the various Jat and Ahir Janpads. The Yadava dynasty in Karauli was established by destroying the Yadava Janpads. This is how the Janpads in Rajasthan gradually gave way to dynastic rule.

Kshtriya kingdoms had started coming into being in Rajasthan as early as sixth century A.D. in the wake of the disintegration of the Gupta empire. These Kshatriyas were later on known as Rajputs who were supposed to belong to the solar or the lunar races or to the Agnikulas. In the ancient period there were two Pratihar<sup>1</sup> dynasties ruling in Marwar one at Mandavyapura (Mandor) and the other at Bhinmal, known earlier as Shrimal. The Mandavyapura dynasty was founded in the sixth century AD by Harish Chandra. His great grandson Narabhal (625-650 AD) made Medantaka (Merta) as his capital. The prince, who made a mark in the dynasty, was Siluka. He ruled in early eighth century. He defeated Deoraj Bhati of Lodrwa according to the Jodhpur inscription of Bauka of 837 AD. It is claimed that the principality governed by Siluka corresponded to the former Jodhpur and Bikaner States<sup>2</sup>. The later Pratihars of Mandavyapura became feudatories to the imperial Pratihars of Bhinmal.

### **The Pratihars**

The Pratihars (Kshastriya) occupied the Bhinmal principality in 739 AD after defeating the Chawadas. Nagabhata I, who founded the dynasty, made Bhinmal, 50 kms south of Jalor, as capital of his kingdom. It was during his reign that the Arabs had penetrated deep into Rajasthan after overrunning Kathiawar, Kachchh, Gujarat, Ujjain, Saurashtra and Western Rajasthan. Nagabhata, assisted by Bappa Rawal of Mewar and the Morya Chief, Dhawal of Hadoti, not only checked their advance but also liberated several rulers from the yoke of the Arabs. It was this brilliant achievement of Nagabhata I which laid the sound foundation of the imperial glory of the Pratihars.

According to Hansot inscription of 758 AD Nagabhata's dominion included Bhinmal, Jalor, Abu and some other chunks of territory of Rajasthan and central India. He had occupied Malwa and Lat

1. The term 'Pratihara' means defenders of the frontiers. They were, in fact, responsible for checking the advance of the Arabs into south western Rajasthan. The Pratihars of Mandavyapura and those of Bhinmal (Jalore) had no family ties with each other. The former were Brahmins while the later Kshatriyas.
2. R.C. Majumdar - The History and Culture of the Indian People Vol. VIII p. 154.

(Southern Gujarat) also but had to concede this territory in 757 AD to the Rastrakuta King, Dantidurg, a powerful ruler in south India.

Nagabhata I was inclined towards Jainism. He extended his patronage to Yakshdeo, a Jain scholar. A number of Jain temples were built in his kingdom during his regime which lasted from 739 to 760 AD. His successors Kakkuka and Deoraj ruled from 760 to 778 AD. They were able to maintain status-quo as far as the Pratihara kingdom was concerned.

The successor of Deoraj was Vatsaraja who ruled from 778 to 800 AD. He was an ambitious ruler. Kannauj was then the symbol of imperial power. He captured Kannauj after defeating Indrayudh of Bhandikul. He also defeated the Gauda King, Dharampal, according to the Baroda inscription of 812 AD. Vatsaraja thus became the most powerful king in the north and fulfilled his ambition to become emperor. This was certainly not to the liking of the Rastrakuta king Dhruva. He led his big army to the north and defeated Vatsaraja convincingly. Vatsaraja had to take shelter in Jalor.

Nagabhata II succeeded his father Vatsaraja. In the meanwhile Kannauj was occupied by the Gauda King, Dharampal. Nagabhata had, therefore, to contend with Gaudas as well as the Pratihara's old enemy Rastrakutas. Nagabhata lost the first round in his struggle against the Rastrakuta king Govind III. The latter started his military campaign with a view to capture Kannauj. He overran Chitrakut (Chittorgarh). Nagabhata did not resist his advance. The Gauda King, surrendered to him without a fight. Govind unfurled the Rastrakuta flag over Kannauj. The campaign lasted upto 808 AD.

After his return from his victorious campaign in the north, Govind remained engrossed in domestic problems and soon lost Kannauj to the Gauda King Dharampal. The latter, however could not hold it for long. Nagabhata defeated Chakrayudh, the Governor of Dharampal in 810 AD and occupied Kannauj, the symbol of imperial power. He assumed the title of 'Param Bhattarak Maharajadhiraj Parmeswar' according to the Buchkula inscription of 815 AD. Nagabhata had to fight soon with the Gauda King Dharampal. He convincingly defeated him. Nagabhata II thus became the most powerful emperor in north India. His empire now encompassed Rajasthan, Uttar Pradesh, Malwa, Kathiawar etc. Besides, the rulers of Andhra, Vidarbha, and Kalinga had accepted his suzerainty. The emperor died on August 23, 833 AD. according to 'Prabhavak-Charit' written by Jain Acharya Chandraprabha.

Vatsaraja and Nagabhata were great patrons of Jainism. During their rule some of the oldest Jain texts like Kuvaliamala and Harivansh Puran were written and a number of Jain temples were constructed all over the empire.

Rambhadra succeeded his father Nagabhata II. He was a weak ruler. The forces inimical to the Pratiharas started raising their heads during his reign. Luckily for the Pratihara empire, his reign lasted only a couple of years. Rambhadra's son Bhoj, also known as Mihir, succeeded to the Kannauj throne at a time when the empire was besieged with numerous difficulties as a legacy of his father. The Palas were ready to settle old scores with the Pratiharas. There was trouble in Jalor, Mandor and Kalangar where the local rulers had challenged the authority of Kannauj. He crushed his internal enemies and consolidated his empire. He not only contained the aggressive designs of the Palas but also made incursions into their territory of Bihar. He also hammered the Rastrakutas from time to time but without any significant success. He added southern Rajasthan and parts of Punjab and Malwa to his empire.

The Arab traveller Sulaiman, who came to India in 851 AD, was no friend of the Pratihara empire. Yet he has stated in his memoirs that the Pratihara emperor had the strongest and the largest army in India. He was very wealthy and possessed a large number of horses and camels. Sulaiman went on to add that the media of exchange in his dominion was gold and silver coins. There were number of gold and silver mines in the empire. According to him no kingdom in India was safer from the dacoit menace than the Pratihara empire. Bhoj abdicated his throne in 885 AD and went away to Girinar where he spent last of his years as a saint according to Skanda Puran.

Bhoj's son Mahindrapal I inherited a big and well administered empire. He completed the conquest of the Pala kingdom began by his father and reduced it to an insignificant principality. He occupied Magadha and northern Bengal. Mahindrapal crushed the rebellion in Samastha which had started during his father's regime. His only reverse was in Punjab where he lost the Takk region to the Kashmir ruler Shankar Varma. Mahindrapal ruled till 910 AD.

Mahindrapal was a great patron of literature. A number of poets adorned his court. The greatest among them was Raj Sekhar who wrote several books including Karpoomanjari, Bal Ramayan, Kavya Mimansa and Bal Bharat. His wife, Avantisundari, was also a noted poetess. Raj

Sekhar has spoken highly of the dresses, ornaments and the manners of the women of Kannauj and has stated that women of other countries could learn a lot from them. Kannauj had, in fact, become a great centre of Indian culture during the Pratihara rule.

Mahindrapal was the last important ruler of the Pratihara dynasty. His successors could not retain their hold over the big empire. In 916 AD, the Rastrakutas, the traditional enemies of the Pratiharas, led an expedition against Kannauj. A long drawn out struggle ensued between the two giants for the supremacy in the north. Both were weakened in the process. The Pratiharas were no more a power to be reckoned with. Things came to such a pass that the Pratihara King Devpal, whose ancestor Bhoj ruled over Chittor with an iron fist, was slain by the Mewar ruler Allata in about 948 AD.

The cracks had started appearing in the Pratihara empire since the death of Mahindrapal. Apart from the dissensions in the royal family, the various feudatories had begun asserting their independence from Kannauj. The result was that when the Turkish army invaded Kannauj in 1018 AD the Pratihara empire fell like a house of cards. The last Pratihara king Rajyapal fled from the capital and was eventually killed by the Khajuraho ruler, Vidyadhar Chandella. Thus came to an end the great Pratihara empire which flourished for more than two centuries. It was the first empire having its roots in Rajasthan<sup>1</sup>.

### **The Sakumbhari Chauhans**

The Shakumbhari Chauhans were the only other dynasty from Rajasthan which attained imperial status in the pre-Sultanate period. The origin of Chauhans is still shrouded in mystery. Some describe them as fire-born Kshatriyas while others put them as descendants of the lunar lineage. Still others assign them the solar-lineage. According to some scholars the Chauhans were originally Brahmins.

Vasudeo is considered to be the first historical person in the Chauhan genealogy. He carved out a principality in Sambhar region in about 551. AD. Since he was blessed by the goddess Shakumbhari the family came to be known as 'Shakumbhari Chauhans'.

The Chauhans remained feudatories of the Pratiharas during the latter's hey day. Durlabhraj I, Guvak I and Guvak II had served Pratiharas during the period from 793 to 815 AD as their generals. With the collapse

1. The credit for reconstructing the history of the Pratiharas goes to the well known Rajasthan historian, the late Dr. Dasharatha Sharma.

of the Pratiharas in early part of the eleventh century AD, the Chauhan ruler Vigraharaj II threw off his allegiance to Kannauj and became independent ruler of Sapadalaksha or Swalik comprising the area of Ajmer, Nagaur and Sambhar<sup>1</sup>.

Ajaidev, also called Ajairaj, was the next important Chauhan ruler who lived about 1108-1133 AD. He founded the city of Ajmer. He defeated the Malwa ruler Naraverman. He also repulsed attacks by Ghazanvites, though he seems to have lost Nagaur. He was succeeded by his son Arnoraj. The latter inflicted a crushing defeat on the Turks who had raided Pushkar. He constructed Anasagar at a place where the battle with the Turks was fought. He was, however, badly mauled by the Chalukya ruler Kumarpal in the battle of Abu in 1145 AD. He gave his daughter in marriage to Kumarpal as a token of acceptance of defeat according to a Chittorgarh inscription of 1150 AD. Soon thereafter he was assassinated by his son Jagdev. The latter was ousted by his younger brother Bisaldeo who ascended the throne of Sapadalaksha in about 1151 AD and assumed the name of Vigraharaja IV<sup>2</sup>.

Vigraharaja conquered Delhi from the Tomaras. He added Pali, Jalor and Nadol in Marwar and Mandalgarh, Jahajpur and Bijolia in Mewar to his kingdom. He defeated Bhadanakas. He occupied the area upto Shivalik hills and cleared the last vestiges of the Turkish rule in the region.

Vigraharaja IV was a brave king and had built up a powerful army. He was a great scholar also. He wrote the classical 'Harkeli Natak' comparable to the one by Bhavbhuti. He constructed the great Sanskrit college which was turned later as a mosque by Muslim conquerors. It is now called as 'Adhai-din-Ka Jhonpara'. He had poets like Somdeo, the author of 'Lalit Vigraharaj' in his court. He constructed the lake known as Visalsar near Ajmer. He was the first Chauhan emperor in India<sup>3</sup>.

Prithviraj III, the great grandson of Vigraharaja IV succeeded the throne in 1177 AD. He was the last and yet the most powerful of the Chauhan emperors. During his military campaigns he captured Ahirwati (Alwar) from Bhadanakas and Mahoba from Chandelas and fought battles with Chalukyas of Gujarat. He had also incurred hostility of Jaichand Gahadwal of Kannauj. He had thus created enemies all around his Sapadalaksha empire.

1. Har Bilas Sarda, "Ajmer, Historical and discriptive" p. 149.

2. Prithviraj Vijaya. VI 32, VII 12.

3. Harvilas Sarda - Ibid, p. 151-52.



Sultan Shahabuddin of Ghor (Mohammad Ghor), who had occupied Multan and Uchha after defeating the Ghazanvis, saw that it was a golden opportunity to build an empire in India. He occupied Punjab and Sindh and threatened the Chauhan territory. He led several probing missions. He was even caught twice in the process but was let off by Prithvi Raj. Ghor occupied Sarhind in 1189 AD. Prithviraj proceeded towards Sarhind to recapture the fort. The battle took place at Tarain near Sarhind in 1191 AD in which Ghor was defeated. He was wounded and taken out of the battle field.

Ghor regrouped his forces and set out with a big army to avenge his defeat. In the later part of 1192 AD he reached Lahore and served an ultimatum on Prithviraj to acknowledge his sovereignty. Prithviraj rejected the ultimatum and advanced towards Ghor with a huge army. Ghor used a ruse with Prithviraj and sought time for seeking permission of his brother to negotiate peace with him. Prithviraj agreed. Ghor surrounded the Chauhan forces during the truce. Unprepared and unaware, the Chauhan army was defeated. Prithviraj himself was taken as a prisoner. He was brought to Ajmer where he was put to death. Thus ended the rule of the last Hindu emperor opening the flood gates of Muslim rule in India.

### **The architecture**

The Shakumbhari Chauhans had left a rich heritage behind them. They built the strategic fort of Taragarh on the crest of the towering hill Bithali overhanging the city of Ajmer. The fort is also called 'Ajaymeru' after the name of its builder Ajaipal who founded Ajmer in 1153 AD. Some historians, however, suggest that it was Ajaipal Chakwa, a forefather of Ajaipal, who built the fort in the seventh century. Be that as it may, it is one of the oldest forts in Rajasthan.

The fort, nearly two miles in circuit, had an abundant supply of water in all seasons from tanks and cisterns cut in the live rock. The walls of the battlements were constructed of huge blocks of stone, cut and squared, so as to make a plain stone wall, 20 feet thick and as many feet high. The principal strength of the fort lay in the ruggedness of the hill, which except on the south, was practically inaccessible<sup>1</sup>. The fort had as many as nine gates. Each gate became a battle field making it difficult for the enemy to advance from one gate to the other. A number of sieges sustained by the fort during the mediaeval period and earlier bear witness to its strategic importance.

1. H.B. Sarda, *Ibid*, p. 42-43.

The complex known as 'Adhai-din-ka-jhonpara' was originally a centre of Sanskrit learning set up by the first Chauhan emperor of India, Vigraharaja IV in 1153. It was built in the form of a square, 259 feet each side, with cloisters on all the four sides enclosing a specious court yard and four splendid star shaped cloister towers on the four corners surmounted by magnificent chhatrees. The towers, the exquisitely designed fluting and ornamental bands of the columns were destroyed by the forces of Sultan Shahabaddin Ghori who attacked Ajmer in 1192 AD. It was converted into a mosque. The Imamghah or mehrab in white marble was built in 1199 AD and the magnificent screen-wall consisting of seven arches was added during the reign of Sultan Iltutmis in 1213 AD. There is a vast pillared hall 248' × 40' in the complex. In this hall there are five rows of columns numbering 70 in all. The pillars have a greater height than those at the Kutub Minar and are elegant in their sculpture and appearance.

A few black-stone tablets have been found during excavations in the compound of the building by Cunningham. Some of the tablets are inscribed with portions of two Sanskrit dramas called 'Harkeli Natak' and 'Lalit Vighraharaj Natak' assignable to twelfth century AD. The former was composed by Vigraharaj IV<sup>1</sup> and the later by Somdeo, a poet in Vigraharaj's court. These tablets show that Vigraharaj was not only a great king but a poet, a scholar and a patron of learning. The other inscriptions are in Arabic recording the history of the building after it came into the hands of Ghori<sup>2</sup>.

How this complex came to be known as 'Adhai-din-ka-Jhonpara' is still a mystery. The version that it was built in two and a half days is wholly unacceptable. A splendid building like this can not be constructed or even converted in a few days or even in a few months. Another version is that it was so named by the Fakirs who made it a temporary abode during the last phase of the Mughal empire. Col. Tod held the building as one of the most perfect as well as one of the most ancient monuments of Hindu architecture<sup>3</sup>. Referring to the screen-wall the famous archaeologist General Cunningham described it as a higher and noble style of art than the Saracenic architecture ever reached<sup>4</sup>.

1. H.B. Sarda, Ibid, p.75.

2. H.B. Sarda, Ibid, p.82-83.

3. Col. Tod, A&A of Rajasthan Vol.I, p. 778.

4. Archaeological Survey Report Vol.II p. 263.

The famous 'Anasagar' lake, which was a source of drinking water supply to the city of Ajmer in not distance a past, was built by Arnoraj, the grand father of the last Hindu Emperor Prithviraj in the second quarter of the twelfth century. Arnoraj also repaired the famous Pushkar lake<sup>1</sup>. His son and successor Vighraharaja IV or Vishaldeo built the Vishalsar lake (Vislia).

The Taragarh fort, the Adhai-din-ka-jhonpara, the various lakes built by the Chauhan rulers and the discovery of the Sanskrit dramas inscribed on slabs are sufficient evidence of the fact that Ajmer enjoyed high degree of economic prosperity during the reign of the imperial Chauhans.

### **The Guhils**

Guhaditya, the progenitor of the illustrious Guhil dynasty of Mewar<sup>2</sup>, migrated from Anandpur (Gujarat) and established his rule in Vaghad and Bhomat around 565 AD after subjugating the Bhil and Meena tribes.

The fifth Guhil ruler Siladitya (646 AD) consolidated the gains of Guhaditya. According to the Samoli inscription of 646 AD he had won many a battle and brought happiness and prosperity to his people. The inscription hails Shresti Jayant for building a temple of Chandika at Zawar where 18 well known engineers and hundreds of healthy and well to do workers from various parts of the country came and worked. That the zinc and silver mines at Zawar were exploited during Siladitya's reign is confirmed from this inscription. The immigration of Jayant from Vatanagar to Zawar indicates that it had become an important centre of trade and industry in those days. The sculptures of this period found at several places in the area indicate that Siladitya patronised artists<sup>3</sup>.

The later Guhils remained almost in wilderness till the emergence of Bappa Rawal (Mahendra) on the scene in the beginning of the eighth century AD. With the blessings of Harit Rishi, Bappa not only recovered the possessions of his ancestors but also captured the fort of Chittorgarh from the Mori ruler, Man. He built the famous Eklingji temple at Nagada which is about 15 km. away from Udaipur. The Guhils had their capital at Nagada before Bappa occupied Chittorgarh<sup>4</sup>.

1 H.B. Sarda, *Ibid.*, p. 139.

2. It was formerly known as 'Medpat'

3. R.V. Somani — *History of Mewar* p 37-38.

4. According to bardic traditions the fort was built by Raja Chitrangad Morya and named it as 'Chitrakoot' after himself. The fort had been the scene of many a bloody war and Johar during the mediaeval period.

Bappa had helped the Pratihar king Nagabhata I in driving out the Arabs from Rajasthan. He abdicated the throne in 753 AD and took to sanyas. He passed his remaining days at Eklingji. His samadhi is still there<sup>1</sup>. Bappa's successor Khuman lost Chittorgarh to Govind III, the Rastrakuta king from Deccan, by the end of the eighth century according to the Sirur grant of 866 AD<sup>2</sup>. Subsequently the Pratihar ruler Bhoja of Kannauj occupied the fort. In 916 AD the Rastrakutas and the Pratiharas were locked in a bitter struggle for the supremacy over Kannauj. The Guhil ruler Bhartaribhatt took advantage of the situation. He married a Rastrakuta princess and recovered Chittor from the Pratiharas with the help of the Rastrakuta king Krishna III of Karnataka some time in the third decade of the tenth century AD. This led to a flourishing trade between Ahar and Karnataka according to the Sarneswar inscription of 953 AD. Devpal, one of the last Pratihar kings, made an attempt to capture Chittor but the Guhil king Allata not only foiled his attempt but also killed him.

Allata consolidated his power further by marrying a Huna princess, Hariyadevi. The political situation prevailing in the country during his reign was precarious. The Pratihar empire had disintegrated. The Parmars, the Chauhans and the Chalukyas were fighting amongst themselves for supremacy in northern India. Allata had, however, no ambition for the imperial crown. He concentrated on the development of his kingdom. He developed Ahar as a centre of trade and made it his capital. The city regained its pristine glory. The architecture flourished during his reign. The Ambika temple at Jagat is an example. It has a sanctum with 'Pancharath Sikhar' of 17 turrets and a sabha-mandap having inscriptions from 960 to 1688 AD<sup>3</sup>. Allata was, perhaps, the first ruler in Mewar who introduced the institution of bureaucracy. The Sarneswar temple inscription of 953 AD contains a list not only of his ministers but also of other Government officials. He conducted inter-religion debates from time to time.

Allata was succeeded by his son Naravahan. According to an inscription of 971 AD at the Eklingji temple a great inter-religion debate amongst the Shavitis, the Jains and the Buddhists was held in the court

1. Shyamaldas, *Veer Vinod* part I. p. 251-52.

2. R.V. Somani, *Ibid.* p.47.

3. R.V. Somani, *Ibid.* p. 52-54.

of Naravahana. It was during his reign that poets like Amra and Yogaraj flourished.

After comparative peace from 916 to 977 AD, Mewar was again in turmoil. Sakti Kumar, the grandson of Naravahan, succeeded the Mewar throne in 977 AD. He established his sway over Hadoti. This caused discomfiture to the Malwa king, Punj Parmar. The latter defeated Sakti Kumar and occupied not only Hadoti but also some parts of eastern Mewar. Sakti Kumar had to take shelter with the Rastrakuta king Dhaval. A number of his samants crossed over to the Parmars.

Sakti Kumar was succeeded by Ambaprasad. Mewar was now surrounded by enemies from all sides. The Chauhan king Vakpitrāja II of Sapadalaksha invaded Mewar. He annexed Uparmal (Bijolia). Ambaprasad himself was killed in the battle field. The hostility between his successors and the Parmars of Malwa continued. About 1012 AD, the Malwa ruler Bhoj deposed Yogaraj and put his nominee Vairath on the throne of Mewar. He also occupied Chittor. He stayed there for quite some time to stabilise the position of Vairath. Having been reduced to the size of a petty principality, Mewar was now almost a vassal state of Parmars. Its humiliation was complete. The leading traders left the State affecting its economy adversely.

With Bhoj's death Mewar's fortune took a turn for the better. The Chalukyas and the Chauhans were now ready to settle scores with the Parmars. Vijay Singh, the ruler of Mewar, married the daughter of the Malwa king Udayaditya. This brought Mewar and Malwa closer. Mewar's existence was no more at stake. Ofcourse, Chittor continued to be occupied by the hostile powers for next 150 years. It changed hands from Parmars to Chalukyas and to Chauhans and back to Chalukyas (1169 AD). As for Uparmal it remained in the possession of Chauhans till the end of the 12th century.

The Ghul dynasty of Mewar could never attain the imperial status, though it did make one or two attempts in this direction during the medieval period, as we shall see later. It had, however, the unique distinction of being the only dynasty in the world which survived for more than 12 centuries. It was also a highly respected dynasty among the 562 and odd native states in India prior to the abolition of the princely order in 1948-49.

### **The Bhatīs**

Among the other Kshatriya dynasties of Rajasthan in the pre-Sultanat period, the Bhatīs of Jaisalmer occupied an important

position. The Bhatīs belonged to the Yadava dynasty of the lunar-race and claimed decent from Lord Krishna of the Mahabharata fame.

According to legends with the death of Lord Krishna, the Yadava kingdom of Dwarka disintegrated. The Yadavas migrated to Sindh, Punjab and other parts of north western India. One of the Yadava leaders, Raj, ruled over the arcas near Peshawar about 543 AD. It is said that he had repulsed the attack of Farcedshah, the ruler of Khurasan.

Raj's decendent Salivahan founded Shalbhanpur (now Shyalkot) and made it his capital. It was Deoraj Bhati, the grandson of Salivahan, in whose name the Bhati dynasty of Jaisalmer was known. The period assigned to Bhati is 623 AD. It seems that he was the first Yadava leader who made in-roads in Rajasthan. According to Khyats, Bhati founded the town of Bhatner in north Rajasthan. The town is now known as Hanumangarh (Ganganagar district)<sup>1</sup>.

Dhundhi of Gazani attacked Shalbhanpur during the regime of Mangal Rao, the son of Bhati. Mangal Rao alongwith his son Manjam Rao left Shalbhanpur and took shelter in the inhospitable Thar desert. Kehar, the son of Manjam Rao, created terror in the region by taking resort to depredations and dacoities and established his control in the area. He built the fort of Tannot (Jaisalmer district) in the name of his son Tannuji and made it as his capital. During his 80 year long rule, Tannuji consolidated the position of the emerging Bhati state. He defeated the Varahas and the Langhas of Multan.

Vijayraj succeeded Tannuji. Varahas and Langhas led a joint expedition against Tannot but were defeated. Later on they took revenge and killed the Bhati family. The only survivor was Vijayraj's young son Deo Raj II who was dispatched quietly by one of the ladies of the family to a safer place. Deoraj remained in wilderness for about 10 years.

When Deoraj came of age, he built his following. He defeated the Varahas and captured Lodrva from the Lodrva Rajputs. He made Lodrva (Jaisalmer district) as his capital. He assumed the title of Maharawal. From the Bauka inscription of 837 AD, it appears that he was defeated in 757 AD by the Pratihar ruler Banka of Mandor. He was killed by the Channa Rajputs<sup>2</sup>.

1. J.S. Gehlot, *Rajputane Ka Itihas* p. 651.

2. Tod, *A&A of Rajasthan II*, p.1199

Maharawal Vijayraj, a decendent of Deoraj, was an important ruler of the Bhati dynasty. He repulsed attacks of the Arabs from time to time in recognition of which the neighbouring rulers conferred on him the title of 'Uttar Bhad Kivad Bhati'. Several inscriptions of his time including the one of 1163 AD have been found in Jaisalmer district.

Jaisal Deo came on the throne in the middle of the twelfth century. He founded the city of Jaisalmer in 1155 AD and shifted the Bhati capital from Lodrava to Jaisalmer. He expanded his territory to a considerable extent. Pungal, Chohatan and Rohadi Sakkar were parts of his principality. The Bhati rule in Jaisalmer survived till the State was merged in Rajasthan in 1949. We shall revert to the remaining history of Jaisalmer State later.

### **The Yadvas**

Karauli was yet another Yadava State in Rajasthan. Like Yadavas of Jaisalmer, the Yadavas of Karauli too claimed their decent from Lord Krishna. During Krishna's time the Yadavas had ruled over Brijdesh. Since, however, the Magadha king Jarasand created lot of trouble for Yadavas, Krishna shifted from Mathura to Dwarka in Kathiawar. As soon as Jarasand was killed, one of the Yadava branches shifted back to Mathura.

According to Khyats, Ichhupal Yadava ruled over Mathura in 879 AD. As Mahamood Gajanvi had looted Mathura and the invasions from across the western frontiers of the country continued, Vijaypal one of the decendents of Ichhupal, shifted his capital from Mathura to Mani hills where he built a fort (later on known as Bayana fort) in 1040 AD. Vijaypal was killed in an encounter with the Ghaznavites in 1093 AD. The latter occupied the fort.

Tawanpal succeed his father Vijaypal. He built a new fort 'Tawangarh' near Bayana. He extended his sway over Alwar, Bharatpur, Karauli, Dholpur, Agra, Gwalior and Mathura. He assumed the title of "Param Bhattarak Maharajadhiraj Parmeswar". He died in 1160 AD. His successors proved weak. His grand son Kunwarpal was turned out from his kingdom by Muhammd Ghori in 1196 AD. He took shelter in Rewa. His successors lived in wilderness for more than one and a half centuries. It was about 1327 AD that Arjunpal recovered some of the possessions of his ancestors. He founded the town of Karauli and made it his capital.

### **The Kachhavas**

The Kachhawas of Dhundhar (Jaipur) claim their decent from Kush, the second son of Lord Rama of the solar race. In the tenth century AD, the Kachhawas were in possession of the principalities of Narwar, Gwalior and Dubkund. All of them were the feudatories of the Pratiharas of Kannauj<sup>1</sup>.

Durlabhraj (Dulharaj), son of Sodharao of Narwar, captured Dausa from Badgujars some time in the later part of the tenth century and laid the foundation of the Kachhava state in Rajasthan. He occupied Bhandarej, Machi and Jhotwara after defeating the Meenas. He captured Deoti from Badgujars. He died in 1037 AD and was succeeded by his son Kakil. The latter annexed Amber<sup>2</sup> from Soorawat Meenas. There were about 52 small Janpads of Meenas in and around Amber. Each Janpad or 'Gadhi' was in charge of a leader. They all owed allegiance to the Meena ruler of Amber. In an emergency the Meenas would gather at Amber at the beat of drums and would meet any eventuality together. The Kachhavas put an end to the hegemony of the Meenas in Amber region and the rule of Badgujars in Dausa and brought their territories into a unified principality known as Amber. During the 12th century the Kachhawas became feudatories of the imperial Chauhans of Ajmer. Kachhawa Pajvan had married the daughter of Prithviraj Chauhan. In size as well as power the Amber principality by this time was not much of consequence. Its rise as a regional power came during the Mughal period.

### **Other principalities**

The other princely states in Rajasthan came into being after the establishment of the Sultanate of Delhi. Prior to this, the Hadoti region (Bundi, Kota and Jhalawar), which was occupied by Bhils and Meenas, was under the sway of the kingdom of Malwa. The Chauhan rulers of Nadol and Jalor, the Parmars of Abu and Bhinnmal were feudatories of the Chalukyas of Gujarat.

The period from sixth century AD to the early part of twelfth century AD in Indian history had been one of major political upheavals. Northern India saw the rise and fall of many an empire. The Rastrakutas, the Pratiharas and the Palas vied against each other for the control of

1. J.S. Gehlot, *Rajputana-ka-Ithihas* III, p. 61.

2. Shyamaldas, *Veer Vinod* II, p. 1263. On page 1269 of the same book, the author says that Kakil had himself founded the city of Amber and that it was Rajdeo who made Amber as capital of the Kachhava territory.



Kannauj the symbol of imperial power. The internecine wars led to their decline almost simultaneously. Their feudatories became independent and the invasion from the north-west did the rest. In the later part of the twelfth century the Chauhans of Ajmer established their supremacy over northern India. Prithviraj III fought quite a few battles successfully against the Ghor-king, Shahbuddin Muhammad Ghori. He, however, lost the final round at Tarain and that cleared the way for the Sultanate rule in India.

### **Literature and art**

Like the rest of northern India, Rajasthan too had to pass through the traumatic experience of suicidal wars among the local rulers. In spite of this, it is remarkable that the region took tremendous strides in the field of literature, art and culture during the critical period. And in this the Jains made the most significant contribution.

The earliest work in the ancient Rajasthani literature was by Haribhadra Suri who wrote *Neminath Charit* and several other books at Chittor in the early part of the eighth century. In 778 AD Udyotan Suri completed his classical work '*Kuvalayamala*' in Jalor fort. While *Harivans Puran*, *Pawan Charit*, *Jambudeep Pashnati* and *Dharmodeshmala-Viraran* were written by Jain saints and scholars in the eighth and ninth centuries, *Mahapurān* and *Abhidan Chintamani* were the product of tenth and eleventh centuries.

The Pratihar emperor Mahendrapal, who ruled till 910 AD, was not only a brave and able ruler but also a patron of literature. He had many poets in his court. The famous poet Raj Sekhar was one of them. He was the author of several books including *Karpurmanjari*, *Bal-Ramayan*, *Bal Bharat*, *Harvilas* etc. The poet Magha, author of '*Shishupal Vadh*', was born at Bhinmal in 7th century AD. He was a great Sanskrit scholar. Vagbhatta, who wrote '*Kavya-anushashan*' in tenth century AD, was born in Mewar.

A number of Jain temple were built all over Rajasthan during this period. Some of these temple were destroyed by the Muslim invaders or the Sultans of Delhi. Quite a few of them were a fine specimen of the Jain architecture. Finely carved Mandaps and ceilings with *Padama Shila*, *Ukshipta* and similar other decorative elements are their chief characteristics<sup>1</sup>.

1. R V Somani, *Jain Inscription of Rajasthan*, p. 92-93.

The world renowned Jain temple, the Vimal Vasahi of Delwara in Sirohi district, was built by Vimal Shah, the general of the Chalukyas, in 1031 AD, at a cost of Rs.18.53 crore under the supervision of the architect Kiratidhar. Known for its architectural marvel, the temple has as many as 259 stone inscriptions.

The Jain school of art had started developing in the eleventh century AD. The miniature paintings in the Jain books like *Nisithchurni*, *Angsootra*, *Neminath Charit* and *Kalpsutra* depict vibrant colours, red blue and gold, and with highly decorative designs. Mariyo Busagli regarded the Jain art as at once neat and revolutionary in character<sup>1</sup>. According to the well known art critic Dr. Jaisingh Niraj, the *Kalpsutra* written by Bhadrabahu Swami in 1159 AD, was the first illustrated work of western India. Dr. Niraj is of the view that the Jain art of this period laid the foundation of the future Rajasthan school of art<sup>2</sup>.

### **The rulers**

Louis XIV of France had claimed, 'I am the State'. The saying could aptly be applied to the rulers of the various principalities in Rajasthan, as elsewhere in the country, during the period 600-1200 AD. They enjoyed absolute powers of governance in every field, whether it be executive, legislative or judicial. They were also the supreme commanders of their respective defence forces.

The titles of the rulers differed from kingdom to kingdom depending on the quantum of sovereignty enjoyed by them. The Imperial Chauhans of Ajmer had assumed the title of 'Param Bhattaraka Maharajadhiraj Parmeswar'. They were sovereign kings. The Guhils of Mewar were called 'Rawals' and the Bhatias of Jaisalmer as 'Maharawals'. Both were quasi-sovereigns. The Chauhans of Nadol and Jalore owed allegiance to the Chalukyas of Gujarat. They called themselves as 'Maharajadhiraj'. The Parmars of Abu, who were mere feudatories, were styled as 'Mandleswar' or 'Mandalika'.

In matters of succession, the law of primogenitor was followed and normally the eldest son of the deceased ruler succeeded the throne. The wives of the rulers were known as Maharanis or Ranis. The sons of the rulers were called Rajputras or Raj Kumars. The eldest son was some time addressed as Yuv Raj or Babjiraj. The members of the ruling family were given Jagirs for their maintenance.

1. Indian Miniature, p.43

2. Anima, 1971 p.102

### **The Administrative system**

Though the feudal system had started during the Guptas and even earlier, it grew in dimension in the seventh century AD onwards, when the rulers started granting land to the civil and military officers and their own kinsmen in lieu of their services. The feudal lords were called Rajas, Raos, Thakurs or Samants. They had to pay a fixed part of their land revenue to their rulers as token of their allegiance to them. Besides, they had to maintain a specified number of troops for their masters. They had to join the battle along with their troops on the call of their rulers. They had also to attend the Ruler's court for a specified period and also on specified days as part of their duty every year.

Barring the obligations imposed on them by the rulers the feudal lords enjoyed full autonomy in their respective jagirs. They charged land revenue from their tenants to the extent of one half of their produce in addition to dozens of lag bags (imposts) on occasions of births, marriages and even deaths. The tenants and others had also to render personal services to the jagirdars without payment of wages. The exploitation of the people and particularly the peasantry was thus complete.

The Jagirdars were mainly Rajputs who fought for their masters in defence of their country. Though the patta of every jagir was renewed on the death of its holder, the feudal system became hereditary in course of time. However, there had been occasions when the jagirs were confiscated by the ruler on one pretext or the other. The Brahmins were granted Maufis for the maintenance of the temples and performing certain rituals and rites on behalf of the rulers. Most of the land in the states was thus in the hands of Jagirdars and Maufidars.

The land remained directly with the rulers was known as Khalsa (crown land). The tenants, who held the land for cultivation, had to pay a share of his produce to the ruler. The share was normally one fourth of the farm-produce, though one sixth was considered 'ideal'.

The ruler governed his state with the help of some advisers known as Amatyas, Mantris or Dewans. The selection of these high dignatories depended on their reputation and the confidence reposed in them by the ruler. An equally important post was that of Senapati (Commander-in-chief) of the state forces. He was generally from amongst the samants. Because of lack of communications and roads the

district units were small. The village headman (Patel), who was responsible for collection of land revenue, was honorary. It was enough for him that he represented the Government in the village.

### **The economy**

The people of Rajasthan were mainly engaged in agriculture and animal husbandry during all these centuries. Only known industries were the copper mining at Ganeshwar (Khetari) and the zinc, lead and silver mining at Zawar (Udaipur) which were being worked for last several centuries. Until recently it was believed that metallic zinc was first produced when William Champion introduced the "distribution per decendum process" in 1746 in Bristol. However, according to Prof.K.T.M. Hegde of the M.S. University of Baroda, excavations carried out at Zawar during the last few years revealed that mining and production of zinc had been in progress in the area since the 1st century B.C. and that brass was being produced by mixing metallic zinc with copper<sup>1</sup>. No wonder the Zawar settlement flourished as an important centre of trade and industry during the period. The other centres well known for internal trade were Bhinmal, Jalor, Osian, Ahar, Chittorgarh, Madhyamika, Baran (Kota) etc. It is not known if the region had any international trade. The region being land locked, the international trade, if any, could be had with Afganistan, Sind etc. through the land routes only.

1. PPST Bulletin. S.No. 15. June 1988, p.63.

## CHAPTER 9

# RAJASTHAN IN THE MEDIAEVAL PERIOD

### (1) MEWAR

Among the ruling dynasties, which survived the twelfth century AD, were the Guhils of Mewar, the Yadavas of Jaisalmer and Karauli and the Kachhavas of Amber. However, with the establishment of the Slave dynasty under Qutubuddin Aibak in 1206 AD at Delhi, a number of new kingdoms started coming into being in Rajasthan.

#### **The Guhils**

In the middle of twelfth century Kshem Singh, the Guhil ruler of Mewar, assumed the title of Rawal. The Chauhan ruler Raja Ketoo of Jalor defeated Rawal Samant Singh, the successor of Kshemsingh and occupied Mewar some time in 1177 AD. Samantsingh went away with his family to Vagad. His brother Kumarsingh soon ousted Ketoo with the help of the Chalukya ruler of Gujarat, Bheem II and ascended the Mewar throne according to the Kumbhalgarh inscription of 1460 AD. The Chalukya ruler, however, retained the control of Ahar in lieu of the military assistance extended to Kumarsingh.

Jaitrasingh, the great grand son of Kumarsingh, ascended the throne in 1213 AD. By now the Chalukyas had become weak. Jaitrasingh occupied Ahar and successfully crossed swords with the rulers of Gujarat, Malwa, Nadol and the army of Sultan Eltutmish. He also captured Vagad and entrusted it to his son Sihad according to the Uparganva inscription of 1404 AD. He shifted his capital from Nagada to Chittorgarh, as Nagada was devastated by Eltutmish who later on withdrew from Mewar.

Tejsingh succeeded his father Jaitrasingh in 1250 AD. He defeated the invading forces of Sultan Balwan of Delhi in 1253 AD. During the reign of his son Rawal Samar Singh, the forces of Alauddin Khilji passed through Mewar while on their way to Gujarat and devastated the temples of Delwara (Mewar), Eklingji and Nagada. The famous

Kirtistambh and the Shrangar Chanwari temple on the Chittor fort were built during his rule.

Ratansingh succeeded Samarsingh in 1301 AD. During the brief spell of his reign, the first 'shaka' of Chittorgarh took place. Alauddin Khilji, the ambitious Sultan of Delhi, laid a siege to the fort in January 1302 AD. Unmindful of the sporadic attacks by the Rajputs on the Khilji army the siege continued for more than six months leading to shortage of food in the fort. The Rajputs decided 'to do or die'. Hundreds of Rajput women including Rani Padmini, wife of Rawal Ratansingh, committed 'Jauhar' (immolation) to save their honour from the invading hordes. The gates of the fort were then open. The valiant Rajput warriors clad in saffron robes with swords in their hands came out of the fort and fell upon the enemy. Vastly outnumbered as they were, the entire Rajput force including the Rawal and his brave commanders, Gora and Badal, attained martyrdom in the cause of the defence of their motherland. The victorious Khilji ordered the massacre of the people of Chittor. Nearly 30,000 innocent people were slaughtered and a number of temples destroyed.

### **Guhils to Shishodias**

With the death of Rawal Ratansingh the main branch of Guhils of Mewar became extinct. The nearest to this branch were the samants of Shishoda. Rana Hamir, a scion of the Shisoda family, succeeded the throne of Mewar at an early age of 14. The ruling family of Mewar now came to be known as 'Shishodiya' and the rulers adopted the prefix of "Rana" or "Maharana" in place of 'Rawal'.<sup>1</sup>

With the death of Alauddin Khilji in 1316 AD, the fate of the Khilji dynasty was sealed. In 1321 AD. the Tughluqs replaced the Khiljis as Sultans of Delhi. Chittor thus came under the sway of Tughluqs. In the meanwhile Hamir consolidated his position. With the blessings and active help of Barwadi, a Charan lady of Khod (Gujarat), he defeated the forces of Muhammad Tughluq and recovered Chittor in 1337 AD. Chittor thus returned to Mewar after about 34 years.

Hamir, who died in 1364 AD, had ruled over Mewar for sixty years. He once again put Mewar on the political map of India. He defeated not only the forces of Muhammad Tughluq and recovered Chittor but also helped Deva Hada in the establishment of the Hadoti principality. The

1. The title of 'Rana' was conferred on Rahap, the Chief of Shishoda, by his father Rawal Karansingh, the son of Rawal Ratansingh, according to Shyamaldas.

Hadas, of course, repaid the debt in full when they fought on the side of Rana Kheta, the successor of Hamir, against the ruler of Malawa<sup>1</sup>. Kheta was killed in a skirmish with the Hadas at Bundi where he had gone to marry a Hada princess. The Mewar forces retaliated, killed Lalsingh Hada, the ruler of Bundi and occupied his principality.

Kheta's successor Lakha ruled from 1381 to 1419 AD. He added Gorwar to his territory. He also suppressed the rebellion of Mers of Badnor. He returned Bundi to Hadas after they expressed regret over the incident in which his father Kheta had been killed. The period of Lakha was comparatively peaceful. New silver and the zinc mines were discovered at Zawar during his period<sup>2</sup>. He built many tanks and repaired a number of forts. The trade between Mewar and Gujarat flourished. Delwara, Chittor and Zawar became main centres of trade. A number of Jain and other temples were built in the State. A banzara (wandering tribe) built the famous Pichhola lake (Udaipur) during Lakha's rule.

At a late age Rana Lakha married Hansabai, daughter of Rathor Rao Chunda of Mandor. Hansabai gave birth to a son named Mokal. On Lakha's death in 1492 AD<sup>3</sup>, Mokal succeeded him in accordance with the assurance given to the Rathors by Lakha's eldest son Chunda to the effect that the son born of Hansabai would succeed the Mewar throne irrespective of his (Chunda) claim as the eldest son of Lakha. Mokal's succession led to the interference of Rathor Ranmal, brother of Hansabai, in the affairs of the State. The court-intrigues compelled Chunda to leave Mewar. He joined the forces of the Sultan of Malwa.

Mokal was a mediocre ruler. His only important success in the battle field was against the Sultan of Nagaur. He made the Khinchis of Gagron (Kota), the Chauhans of Sirohi and the Hadas of Bundi, all neighbours, hostile to him. His foolish actions turned his own kiths and kins as his enemies. The result was that while he was preparing to fight the Sultan of Gujarat, he was killed by his uncles, Chacha and Mera, in league with Mahapa Panwar in 1433 AD. Mokal had conceded lot of his territory to the neighbouring rulers.

Kumbha, the eldest son of Mokal, succeeded the Mewar throne at a critical juncture in Mewar's history. He proved to be the man of the

1 The stone inscription of Menal of 1389 AD.

2 Shymal Das, *Veer Vinod I*, p. 305.

3 R V Somani, *ibid*, p. 116.

hour. In the early years of his rule Rathor Ranmal, the brother of the queen mother Hansabai, had spread his tentacles far and wide. Ranmal's eyes were in fact set on the Mewar throne. He got rid of Kumbha's uncle Raghav Deo and planned to murder Kumbha himself. The plan, however, leaked out prematurely. Kumbha and his mother quietly recalled Chunda, who had been awaiting an opportunity to avenge the murder of his brother Raghavdeo. Chunda immediately rushed to Chittor. Ranmal was killed. His son Jodha along with a number of his followers fled. Chunda followed them and occupied Mandor. Jodha, however, escaped to safety. The interference of Rathors in the affairs of Mewar thus came to an end after about 15 years. Mandor was restored to Jodha after 7 years through the good offices of Hansabai, the aunt of Jodha and grand mother of Kumbha.

### **A regional power**

Kumbha humbled Mahmood Khilji of Malwa and kept him as prisoner for six months. He now turned to other neighbours and recovered Mandalgarh, Jahajpur and Uparmal from the Hadas of Bundi, captured Kota, Pindwara, Ranakpur and Abu from the Devaras of Sirohi and Nagor, Narena, Ajmer, Sambhar and Chatsu from the Sultan of Nagaur. He recovered Zawar from Dungarpur.

Kumbha defeated the Sultan of Malwa about a dozen of times. He also humiliated the Sultan of Gujarat on quite a few occasions. He successfully met the joint onslaught of the Sultans of Malwa and Gujarat. In short Kumbha made Mewar a power to be reckoned with in north India. The Sultanate at Delhi (Tughluqs) had become too weak at this point of time to stop the winning spree of Kumbha. The great ruler was, however, killed in 1468 A.D. by his own son Udaisingh after 35 years of glorious rule.

Udaisingh, or 'Uda the parricide' as he was contemptuously called, succeeded Kumbha. He was hated by the samants and the people alike. To please and appease the neighbouring rulers, he surrendered a number of parganas to them. This angered the samants further. They invited his younger brother Raimal to take over the kingdom. Raimal captured Kumbhalgarh where Uda was camping. Uda escaped to Sojat. Thus came to an end an unfortunate period in Mewar's history. On instigation by the sons of Uda the Sultan of Mandu, Gayasuddin, invaded Mewar thrice but Raimal repulsed the attacks.



Raimal had 13 sons. The first three of them were Prithviraj, Jaimal and Sanga. Each one of them was brave and ambitious and aspired for the throne of Mewar. This led to the internecine quarrels amongst them. In one of such quarrels Sanga lost his left eye. He left Mewar and landed himself with a gang of bandits led by Karma Panwar of Srinagar (Ajmer). For quite sometime, Sanga remained incognito. When his identity was disclosed, Panwar married his daughter to him. In the meanwhile, Jaimal was killed by Rao Sultan of Badnor and Prithviraj was poisoned to death by his brother-in-law, Rao Jagmal of Sirohi.

Shocked by the deaths of his two sons, Raimal fell ill. By now he had come to know the whereabouts of Sanga. On a message from the Maharana, Karma Panwar brought Sanga to Chittor. In 1508 AD. Raimal died. He was succeeded by Sanga. The only notable event of Raimal's reign was that he gave shelter to Ajjaha and Sajjaha, sons of Raja Raisangh Jhala of Halbad (Gujarat). They and their descendants played significant role in the various wars fought by Mewar.

### **A great warrior**

Sanga started his rule with a bang. He captured Ajmer and conferred it on his father-in-law Karma Panwar. He occupied Chatsu and made the ruler of Chanderi subservient to him. In 1515 AD. he defeated the army of Sultan Ibrahim Lodi of Delhi at Khatoli. In the battle Sanga lost one of his arms and injured one of his legs making him limp for the rest of his life. In 1518 AD Mahmood Khilji, the Sultan of Malwa, invaded the fort of Gagron (Kota) which was in the possession of Medani Rai, the ruler of Raisen. On a frantic appeal made by Medani Rai, Sanga rushed to his help and gave a crushing defeat to the Sultan. He brought the Sultan to Chittor as a prisoner and released him only on payment of war reparations. He kept his son with him as a guarantee for his good behaviour in future.

The same year Sanga led an expedition against the Sultan of Gujarat, Mujjafar Shah. He captured Idar and looted Ahamadnagar. When Mujjafar Shah heard about Sanga's advance, he proceeded towards Sanga's army. The Sultan of Malwa, Mahamood Khilji, also joined him. Mujjafar Shah led the siege to the fort of Mandsor. Good sense, however, prevailed on both sides. The Sultan lifted the siege of Mandsor in lieu of which Sanga released the son of Mahamood khilji from his captivity. Though the honours were even, the upper hand of Sanga was clear in that he retained the control of Idar.

Ibrahim Lodi had not forgotten his defeat at Khatoli. In 1521 he attacked the fort of Ranthambore but Sanga defeated him<sup>1</sup>. Sanga conferred the jagir of Ranthambor on his two younger sons with disastrous consequences for the future.

Having humbled all the three Sultants, Sanga now set his eyes on Delhi, the symbol of imperial power. He invited Babur, a descendent of Timur and the ruler of Kabul, to join him in the ouster of Lodis from Delhi. Babur quickly responded. He advanced towards Delhi. The battle between Babur and Ibrahim Lodi took place at Panipat in 1526 in which Babur decisively defeated Lodi. He captured Delhi and Agra. Babur now decided to cross swords with Sanga for his 'breach of faith'. The later had failed to keep his promise to join him in the battle against Ibrahim Lodi<sup>2</sup>.

Sanga accepted the challenge. He saw in it a golden opportunity to fulfill his ambition to become the emperor of Delhi. He organised a confederacy of Rajput rulers. He was joined among others by Rao Ganga of Marwar and Raja Prithviraj of Amber and the chiefs of Gwalior, Raisen, Kalpi, Chanderi, Bundi, Gagrion, Rampura and Abu. Hasan Khan Mewati, who was deprived of Bayana by Babur and Mahmood Khan, a son of Sultan Sikandar Lodi, also joined the bandwagon of Sanga.

Sanga reached Ranthambhor at the head of an army of more than two lakhs. The two armies clashed on February 21, 1527 at Bayana. Sanga captured the fort and restored it to Hasan Khan Mewati. Babur had to withdraw quite a few kms. away. Sanga convincingly won the first round. The Mughal army was dispirited and was in no mood to give another fight to Sanga. Babur sent frantic messages to Sanga for peaceful settlement. Negotiations were held through the Chief of Raisen, Salhadi Tanwar, who had somehow won the confidence of Babur. Nothing tangible, however, came out<sup>3</sup>. Both sides started planning strategy for the next round. Babur exhorted his demoralised army to "do or die" for the sake of the glory of Islam. He told them that if they won, they would unfurl the flag of Islam over Hindustan and if they lost, they would attain martyrdom. Babur's words had electrifying effect on his men. They were now ready to make supreme sacrifice in the cause of Islam.

1. R.V. Somani, *History of Mewar*, p. 166

2. Shyamaldas, *Veer Vinod I*, p. 364.

3. Shyamaldas, *Veer Vinod I*, p.365.

The next battle took place at Khanwa on the fateful day of March 16, 1527. The effective use of cannons by the Mughal army caused havoc in Sanga's camp. In the meanwhile Raja Salhadi Tanwar crossed over to Babur's side alongwith his army of 35000 at a crucial stage of the battle causing a big gap in Sanga's formations. As if this was not enough, enemy's arrow struck at Sanga's head making him unconscious. He was taken out of the battle field. Sanga's departure created confusion in the ranks of his army. Jhala Ajjha took over the command. It was of no avail. Thousands of soldiers, several chiefs and Ajjha himself were killed. Babur thus won the crucial battle. To celebrate the great event, he assumed the title of 'Ghazi'. Interestingly Babur did not pursue the Mewar army any further.

### **A dream shattered**

The battle of Khanwa proved decisive in laying the foundation of the Mughal empire in India. It shattered the dream of Sanga for the revival of the Hindu empire which had abruptly come to an end following the defeat of Prithviraj Chauhan in 1193 AD. at the hands of Mohammad Ghori. Sanga was brought to Basawa (Jaipur) in an unconscious state. When he regained consciousness, he rebuked his chiefs and nobles for bringing him from the battlefield. He said he would not return to Chittor without settling the score with Babur. He joined his Hadi Rani at Ranthambore and started correspondence with his allies for remobilising the forces for having another round of battle with Babur. Meanwhile some of the nobles, who were opposed to his policy of further confrontation with Babur, administered poison to him while he was in Kalpi. Sanga died in May, 1528.

With Sanga's death an era in Rajasthan history, nay in Indian history, had come to a close. If he had won the battle of Khanwa, which he should have won but for the treachery by one of his important allies, the history of India would have been different. These are however, the ifs and buts of history. In spite of his defeat at Khanwa, Sanga was undoubtedly one of the greatest and the bravest warriors ever born in this country.

### **Incompetent successors**

Ratansingh succeeded Sanga. His reign, which lasted less than 4 years, was lack-luster except that he thwarted the invasion of the Sultan

of Malwa. He was killed by his maternal uncle Hada Suryamal of Bundi in the jungles of Bundi in the course of a hunting expedition.

As Ratansingh had no son, he was succeeded by his brother Vikramaditya, who had been living in his jagir of Ranthambhor alongwith his mother Karmavati and brother Udaisingh. While Vikramaditya's succession as ruler of Mewar ended the family feud over Ranthambhor, he proved thoroughly incompetent for the prestigious throne. Bahadurshah, the Sultan of Gujarat, attacked the fort of Chittor. Vikramaditya and Udaisingh were despatched to Bundi for safety. In the battle, which took place in March 1535 AD, more than 3200 Rajputs lost their lives. As many as 13000 women living in the fort including Rajmata Karmavati committed 'Jauhar'. Bahadurshah captured the fort. As luck would have it, Humayun, who succeeded Babur as emperor, defeated Bahadurshah. This gave an opportunity to the Rajputs to recapture Chittor. Soon thereafter Banveer, the son from a concubine of Sanga's elder brother Prithviraj, assassinated Vikramaditya and usurped the Mewar throne. Banveer also wanted to kill Udaisingh but Panna Dhai put her own son on the bed of Udaisingh and sneaked Udaisingh away to safety. Banveer killed Panna Dhai's son under the impression that he was Udaisingh.

While Banveer assumed the reigns of Government, Panna Dhai took Udaisingh to Kumbhalgarh and handed him over to the commander of the fort, Asha Deopura. Banveer's behaviour with various chiefs of Mewar was outrageous. The chiefs looked upon him as an usurper. Soon it became known that Udaisingh, the rightful claimant to the throne, was alive and safe in the custody of Deopura. Several Mewar chiefs took up his cause. The followers of the two camps clashed near Mavali in which Banveer was defeated. Udaisingh's forces followed the victory with an attack on Chittor. Banveer along with his family escaped to south. Udaisingh was installed as Maharana in 1540 AD.

Udaisingh did not add to the glory of the house of Shishodias. In stead of consolidating his power, he dissipated his energy in uncalled for adventures. By his actions he provoked Rao Maldeo of Jodhpur to attack Kumbhalgarh. Though he successfully repulsed the invasion, he suffered heavily in men and material. He rushed to the help of Hajikhan Pathan at Ajmer when Maldeo attacked him. Maldeo was defeated. Udaisingh

now demanded a dancing girl from Haji Khan as a price for the help rendered to him. When Hajikhan refused to accede to his request Udaisingh attacked him. This gave Maldeo an opportunity to take revenge for the humiliation he suffered at the hands of Udaisingh. He sided with Hajikhan and humbled Udaisingh.

In 1544 AD. Shershah Soori, who had become emperor of Delhi after defeating Humayu, marched towards Rajasthan. He defeated Maldeo and occupied Jodhpur. From there he advanced towards Chittor. Udaisingh sent the keys of the fort to Shershah even before the emperor reached Chittor. Fortunately Shershah soon died and his empire collapsed. Chittor was reoccupied by Mewar.

Udaisingh felt that Chittor was very much vulnerable as capital. He was not very wrong in his assessment. Chittor had been the target of attacks by the Sultans of Delhi from time to time. Even during his own reign he had to surrender the fort to Shershah. He, therefore, founded a new city of Udaipur in 1559 with a view to make it his capital. The same year he laid the foundation stone of Udaisar lake which was completed in 1562 AD.

Akbar, who had succeeded his father Humayun as Mughal emperor in 1556 AD, was well on his way to establish one of the biggest empires in Indian history. In Rajasthan Amber, Jaitaran and Merta had already come under his sway. His eyes were now set on the prestigious fort of Chittor. He started on his mission in August 1567. He captured Shivpuri, Kota and Mandalgarh while on his way. When Udaisingh heard of the Mughal army's advance he shifted to the hills in southern Mewar. The fort was left to be defended by 8000 Rajputs under the command of Jainmal Rathor of Merta whose principality was earlier captured by the Mughals.

Udaisingh's decision to leave Chittor smacked more of his cowardice than an act of statesmanship as made out by certain historians. It was certainly contrary to the glorious traditions of the house of Shishodiyas. In any case it would have been for more preferable if he had surrendered the fort to Akbar and thus saved the lives of thousands of men, women and children, as he had done earlier when Shershah attacked Chittor in 1544. AD.

Be that as it may, Akbar laid the siege to Chittor in October, 1567 AD. Several attempts made by the Mughal army to break open the fort were foiled by the valiant defenders. Various strategies were employed and tons of explosive was used. Nothing, however, succeeded. On the contrary the Mughal army suffered heavy casualties because of intermittent firing from the fort. In spite of this, Akbar persisted with the siege. His policy soon yielded results. The four month old siege created shortage of food in the fort where apart from 8000 soldiers, 40,000 civil population had lived.

At this critical moment the commander of the Rajput forces, Rathor Jaimal, fell to Akbar's gun-shot and it proved to be the proverbial last straw on the camel's back. Seeing no chance of survival, the Rajputs under the leadership of Chundawat Patta decided to perform 'Shaka'. The women and children of the Rajput warriors committed Jauhar. The Rajputs put on saffron robes, armed themselves with swords and jumped on the enemy after opening the gates of the fort. They slaughtered hundreds of the Mughal soldiers before they themselves perished in the cause of Shishodiyas.

### **The great massacre**

Akbar and his army triumphantly entered the fort on Feb. 25, 1568 AD<sup>1</sup>. It was, however, not a cake-walk for them. They had to face the wrath of the civil population of the fort. An angry Akbar ordered the general massacre of the people. The population of the fort was reduced from 40,000 to 10,000. Not a single stone of the fort was left without the blood stains of its valiant sons and daughters. In Akbar's life it was a day of fulfilment. After a stay of three days on the fort Akbar proceeded to Ajmer, partly on foot and partly on horse back to perform 'Ziarat' at the tomb of Khwaja Muinuddin Chisti. The very next year he secured the fort of Ranthambhore from Surjan Hada.

1. The legend had it that on the fall of Chittorgarh, the forefathers of the Gadolia Lohars a tribe wandering on the wheels (Bullock carts), took a vow not to enter the fort of Chittor till it was redeemed from the alien rule. When India became free, the Gadolia Lohars reentered the fort on April 6, 1955 after nearly four centuries with all the fan fare. They were received and led to the fort by no less a person than Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the Prime Minister of India. Among others who were present on the occasion were seven Chief Ministers including Ravi Shankar Sukla of Madhya Pradesh and M.L.Sukhadia of Rajasthan. The guiding spirit behind the move was Manikyalal Varma, the hero of the famous Bijolia movement.

As soon as Akbar left Mewar, Udaisingh returned to Udaipur. He soon left Udaipur and made Kumbhalgarh his head-quarters. He returned to Gogunda in 1570 AD. He fell ill and breathed his last on Feb. 28, 1572 but not before doing another disservice to Mewar. He designated his younger son Jagmal as his heir-apparent over the heads of his eight sons elder to Jagmal. The decision of Udaisingh came in for bitter criticism amongst the chiefs and nobles of Mewar during the cremation of Udaisingh. They decided that Pratap, the eldest son of Udaisingh, should succeed him notwithstanding the wishes of the late Maharana. Soon after the funeral, they assembled at the palace and put Pratap on the traditional gaddi of Mewar after physically removing Jagmal who left Mewar for good. The courageous decision of the chiefs averted what could have been a civil war in the kingdom.

### **Pratap the Great**

Pratap ascended the throne in most trying circumstances. Thanks to the poor legacy of his predecessors viz. Ratansingh, Vikramaditya, Banveer and Udaisingh in a row, the prestige of Mewar was at its lowest ebb. He inherited a truncated kingdom. The strategic forts of Chittor, Mandalgarh and Ranthambhore were in Mughal hands. For the first time in the course of last few centuries there was an emperor at Delhi who was strong and ambitious. Several Rajput rulers had already surrendered and married their daughters to him. Pratap was, however, determined to resist his designs with all his might.

Akbar sent Mansingh Kachhava to Gogunda to persuade Pratap to accept his overlordship. Mansingh's mission failed. The version appearing in the history books speaks of exchange of hot words between Pratap and Mansingh on the bank of the Udaisagar lake. To us the story appears to be a myth created by the contemporary Charans and Bhats. Mansingh, the grand son of Raja Bharmal of Amber, was too young<sup>1</sup> to take liberty with the head of a State like Mewar and Pratap too sober to throw a challenge to Mansingh and his 'Phoonpa' (Akbar) to meet him at the battle field. If such an exchange had taken place as reported in the history books, there is little doubt that Akbar would have immediately rushed to Mewar in spite of his preoccupations elsewhere. On the contrary Akbar realised that Mansingh was too junior and inexperienced to conduct negotiations with Pratap. He, therefore, sent Raja Bhagwantdas of Amber in October 1573 and his (Akbar's) senior

1. Mansingh was then only 24 years of age.

minister Raja Todarmal in December 1573 AD to impress upon Pratap to fall in line with other rulers of Rajasthan so as to avoid blood-shed. Both of them drew blank. The only alternative now left to Akbar was to seek military solution to the Mewar problem.

It was after more than two and a half years of the break-down of negotiations that Akbar decided to launch an attack on Mewar. He dispatched an army under Mansingh against Pratap. A battle took place between the two opposing forces at Haldighati on June 18, 1576. In the first round of the 'no holds barred' battle, the Mewar forces gave a crushing blow to the Mughal army throwing it 15 kms away<sup>1</sup>. The front line of the Mughal army collapsed. The left wing also received a severe thrashing at the hands of Tomar Ramsingh of Gwalior. At this crucial stage of the battle an injured Pratap had to leave the battle field. His famous horse 'Chetak' was killed. Rana's departure caused confusion and chaos in the rank and file of his army. At this very moment a commander of the Mughal forces announced that the emperor himself had arrived alongwith reinforcement. The announcement, though false, did the trick. It boosted the sagging morale of the Mughal army. The Mughals succeeded in defeating Pratap's forces after a bloody battle in which casualties on both sides were heavy. Jhala Man (Bida), who took over the command of the Mewar army after Pratap had left the battle field, gave a last ditch battle and died a heroic death.

Pratap reached Koliari where he attended on his wounded soldiers and reorganised the army. He had, however, learnt the lesson of Haldighati. It became clear to him that it was almost impossible to face the mighty Mughal army in the traditional war-fare. He felt that only way to meet the Mughal onslaught was to take to guerrilla war-fare coupled with scorched earth operations<sup>2</sup>. This type of warfare particularly suited in the hilly terrains covered with dense forests in western Mewar. Pratap, therefore, planned his future strategy accordingly and reaped a rich harvest. The civil population in Udaipur region, which became the theatre of war, was made to vacate the area. The crops were destroyed and the wells were filled. The enemy's supply-lines were cut through sporadic attacks by the Bhils. Mansingh captured Gogunda but could proceed no further because of guerrilla attacks and break-down of essential supplies.

1. Munthakhab-ul-Tawarikh II, page 237

2. The British army had successfully employed the scorched earth policy in Burma against the advancing Japanese army during the second world war.



When Mansingh reported to Akbar about the situation, the latter showed his displeasure by barring his entry into the Mughal court for six months. Pratap recaptured Gogunda and formed a small coalition with the rulers of Idar, Sirohi and Jalor. The coalition, however, went to pieces when the last two States succumbed to the pressure of Akbar. The Mughal army captured Idar in spite of the valiant fight of the joint forces of Mewar and Idar. The defeat in no way affected Pratap's determination to fight Akbar to the last.

In October 1576, Akbar personally led the campaign against Pratap. He captured Gogunda and Udaipur. He established several posts to check the movements of Pratap. He also sent his commanders in various directions to get hold of Pratap, dead or alive, but without success. Disappointed, Akbar left Mewar in December for Malwa. Soon thereafter Pratap recaptured Gogunda, Mohi etc. from the Mughals.

In October 1577 Akbar sent a big army under Shahbajkhan. Pratap was in the Kumbhalgarh fort. Shahbajkhan surrounded the fort. Pratap left the fort and reached Ranakpur on his way to Chawand. The fort fell to the enemy on April 4, 1578 AD. for the first time. Shahbajkhan occupied Gogunda and Udaipur and advanced towards Chawand. Pratap had to take shelter in the hills of Bhomat in southern Mewar. By now most of Pratap's kingdom had come under the Mughals. Pratap himself, however, remained out of their reach.

As soon as the victorious general Shahbajkhan left Mewar in May 1578, Pratap occupied some of the out-posts. He also carried out depredations in Malwa to supplement his resources. Akbar again deputed Shahbajkhan to Mewar in November 1579. The Mughal army chased Pratap from various directions. Hard pressed from all sides, Pratap left Mewar and marked his time in Chumlia. In the meanwhile his generals Bhamashah and Tarachand Kawadia, both brothers, returned from Malwa with a booty of Rs 25 lakhs and 20,000 gold mohars and presented it to the Maharana<sup>1</sup>. The help could not have come more timely. Pratap made Bhamashah his Pradhan (Prime Minister) in recognition of his valuable services at a critical juncture. He returned to Mewar and camped at Dholan.

Pratap now organised raids on the various Mughal outposts in Mewar. He captured Diwer, Amet, Madariya, Kumbhalgarh and Zawar.

<sup>1</sup> Shyamaldas, *Veer Vinod* Vol.II, p. 157.

By 1583 the entire western Mewar came under his control. Akbar sent Jagannath Kachhava at the head of a big army first in December 1584 AD and later in September 1585 to get hold of Pratap. Nothing tangible was, however, achieved. Pratap soon recovered whole of Mewar from the Mughals except Chittor and Mangalgarh which had been in the Mughal possession since the late Maharana Udaisingh's time. Akbar made no further attempt to attack Mewar till Pratap's death. He had realised that his too much involvement in Mewar campaign might shake the foundations of the Mughal empire which he had assiduously built over the years.

Pratap died in January 1597. He enjoyed comparative peace during the last 12 years of his reign. He brought Vagad back under his sway and reestablished his authority over Chhapan. The people, who had migrated to the neighbouring States during the Mughal invasions, returned to Mewar. Following good rains year after year, agricultural activity in the State received a philip and trade prospered. The economy was put on even keel. The State coffers were once again full. Pratap constructed a palace and a temple of Chamund Mata at his new capital Chawand.

It was sheer dint of courage and high sense of patriotism that Pratap, who was the ruler of as small a kingdom as Mewar, could wage a titanic struggle continuously for about 10 years with one of the mightiest emperors of India. No wonder Akbar was in tears when he heard of the death of his greatest adversary. The generation after generation of Indians drew inspiration from Pratap whenever the Indian state was in peril.

### **Mewar Surrenders**

Amarsingh succeeded the Mewar throne on January 29, 1597. It was the twenty-first year of confrontation which started with the battle of Haldighati in 1576 AD. between Mewar and the mighty Mughals. The throne was thus no bed of roses for Amar Singh, as it was not for his illustrious father.

After twelve years of undeclared cease-fire, the Mughals resumed fighting the very next year of Amarsingh's accession to the throne. Akbar dispatched a big army under Prince Salim to Mewar. It occupied several parts of the State. Employing guerrilla tactics, Amarsingh threw away the Mughals from a number of out-posts. Akbar made another attempt to conquer Mewar in 1603 AD. but failed. He died in 1605 without realising his life long ambition of subjugating Mewar.

Salim succeeded Akbar assuming the name of Jahangir. He soon resumed the war against Mewar. Amarsingh took necessary measures to thwart his efforts. He laid Mewar waste to deprive the Mughal army of the local sources of food supply and organised guerrilla attacks against Mughal out-posts. The new emperor sent wave after wave of army against Mewar but failed to achieve his objective.

Jahangir took over the command of the Mewar campaign himself and moved to Ajmer at the head of a big army. He ensured that there was continuous flow of food and other essential articles to the army. He entrusted Prince Khurram with the task of making a final assault on Mewar. The Mughal army continued the advance in spite of guerilla attacks. Gradually the area of operation of Amarsingh shrunk. Cut off from the rest of his kingdom, he found himself confined to the southern hilly tracts. His sources of supply of food were cut. As many as four generations of Rajputs having been killed in 17 major wars against the Mughals, replenishment in the Mewar army became a major problem. The situation was certainly desperate.

Karansingh, son of Amarsingh and heir apparent to the Mewar throne and some of the important chiefs felt that the time had come when settlement should be reached with the Mughals, if it could be had with honour. Prince Khurram was sounded. It was made clear to him that the Maharana would in no case attend the Mughal court personally nor would any Shishodiya princess be given in marriage to the emperor or his sons now or in future. The response from Khurram was quick and positive. The following terms were agreed upon :

1. The heir apparent to the Mewar throne but not the Maharana would attend the Mughal court.
2. Mewar would provide a force of one thousand sowars to the Mughal army as a token of its subordination to the Mughals.
3. The entire Mewar territory including the forts of Chittor and Mandalgarh in the possession of the Mughals would be returned to the Maharana.
4. The repairs of the fort of Chittor would not be undertaken.

The emperor approved the terms without any hesitation. Amarsingh, who was kept in dark about the negotiations, acquiesced in the settlement as a 'fait accompli' and received the emperor's 'firman' at Gogunda on February 5, 1615 from Prince Khurram. Thus came to an

end the hostilities between Mewar and the Mughals. The war, which lasted nearly four decades with intermittent lulls, was the longest ever in the history of India.

Jahangir was the happiest man in the world. He was proud that he had achieved what his great father had failed to do. He received Karansingh at the Mughal court with utmost warmth and bestowed upon him the choicest gifts and favours. He was made a mansabdar of the Mughal empire. As for Maharana Amar Singh, he was a sad man indeed. He received the prestigious fort of Chittor and other territories from the Mughals but at the cost of Mewar's sovereignty. It was no consolation to him that the terms Mewar secured from the Mughals were much more dignified than the ones accepted by other Rajput rulers. Having felt humbled, he handed over the State to Karansingh and spent his remaining years in Ahar. He died there on October 30, 1620.

Karansingh's reign lasted only 8 years. During this period he resettled various parts of Mewar ravaged by a prolonged war. He reorganised the parganas and founded the institutions of 'Patels' and 'Gam-balais' in every village. These minor functionaries served as representatives of the Government at the grass-root level. For collection of land revenue he appointed Patwaris. He built many palaces and parks in Udaipur.

An important event of Karansingh's reign was that Prince Khurram, who became victim of the palace intrigues at Delhi, took shelter in Mewar. Karansingh treated him with utmost cordiality. He and the prince became 'brothers' by exchanging turbans. The historical turban of Khurram is safely preserved even to-day in the Pratap Museum at Udaipur. After spending a few months at the Jagmandir palace in Udaipur, Khurram left for Deccan. In the meanwhile Jahangir died in November 1627. Khurram left south for Delhi via Gogunda to meet his 'brother' Karansingh before he ascended the Mughal throne in the name of Shahjahan. It was, indeed, a great gesture on the part of the prince. Karansingh received him warmly. His brother Arjunsingh escorted him to Delhi.

Jagatsingh succeeded Karansingh. He established his sway over Deolia (Pratapgarh), Dungarpur, Banswara and Sirohi. He also started repairing the fort of Chittor contrary to the Mewar- Mughal treaty of

1615 AD. Shahjahan ignored the action of the Maharana because of his past associations with Mewar.

Jagatsingh died after a reign of 24 years. He performed several 'tuladans'<sup>1</sup>. He built the famous Jagdish temple at Udaipur and completed the Jagmandir palace left unfinished by his father. For the first time in the century the Maharana and other members of his family undertook pilgrimage to several holy places in India. The various religions flourished under his regime. All this indicates that prosperity had returned to Mewar after the war with the Mughals had ended.

### **Confrontation again**

With the accession of Rajsingh to the throne in October, 1652 Mewar was once again on the forefront against the Mughals. As heir apparent Rajsingh had closely followed the intrigues in the Mughal court. During his trips to Delhi, he had established rapport with the crown prince Dara Sikoha. Besides, he knew that Shahjahan had a soft corner for Mewar because of the royal treatment accorded to him at Udaipur when his relations with his father Jahangir were strained. He, therefore, thought that he could take liberty with the emperor with impunity.

Soon after taking over the reigns, Rajsingh continued the repairs of the strategic fort of Chittor started by his father the late Maharana Jagatsingh. He appointed his uncle Garibdas as his adviser, although the latter had incurred the displeasure of the emperor. He also made preparation for 'tika-dor'<sup>2</sup> in the neighbouring Mughal subas. All these things were enough to raise the ire of Shahjahan who was otherwise favourably disposed towards Mewar.

Shahjahan dispatched a 30,000 strong army to Chittor under the command of Sadulla Khan for demolishing the new fortifications made in the fort. He himself also left for Ajmer alongwith a big army, so that he could send reinforcement to Sadulla Khan, if necessary. Realising the gravity of the situation Rajsingh immediately sent a high powered delegation to Shahjahan to dissuade him from invading Chittor. The delegation met the emperor on October 4, 1654 at Khalilpur. The latter turned down the request but agreed to send an emissary to Rajsingh to work out a settlement.

1. The Maharana was weighed against gold or silver which was given in charity to Brahmans. The ceremony was called 'Tuladan'.
2. 'Tika-dor' was part of the succession ceremony under which a new ruler undertook expedition in the neighbouring territory to collect booty.

The Emperor's emissary Munshi Chandrabhan arrived at Udaipur on October 23, 1654. Meanwhile Sadulla Khan reached Chittor and started demolishing the fortifications. He accomplished the task within a fortnight without any resistance from the Maharana. Rajsingh surrendered about 15 parganas including Mandalgarh, Banera and Phulia to the emperor. He sent his six year old son, Sultansingh, to the Mughal court to pay his obsequies to the emperor. The Mughal forces returned from Chittor after completing their mission.

The Maharana marked his time like a wounded tiger. In September 1657, Shahjahan fell ill. He had four sons, namely Dara, Shuja, Aurangzeb and Murad. Each of them wanted to become the emperor of India and were ready to settle the issue by force even before the death of their ailing father. The war of succession amongst the royal princes began. It was a god sent opportunity for Rajsingh. He embarked upon building up his military strength with a view to avenge his humiliation suffered at the hands of the Mughals three years ago.

Dara and Aurangzeb started wooing Rajsingh, the strong man of Rajasthan. The rulers of Amber, Jodhpur and Bundi had already thrown their lot with Dara. Rajsingh had no intention to side with Dara as he had failed to save him from the wrath of Shahjahan. He promised support to Aurangzeb but on the clear understanding that he would come to his help only after he had recovered his territory annexed by Shahjahan. Aurangzeb gave a green signal to Rajsingh to go ahead with his plans. It was obvious that Aurangzeb was anxious to keep Rajsingh on his right side, so that even if he did not come to his help he might not side with Dara.

Rajsingh started his campaign with the capture of Mandalgarh in 1658 AD. He occupied Pur, Mandal, Dariba and Banera after throwing out the Mughal thanedars. He extracted a fine of Rs. 22,000 from Shahpura and Rs. 60,000 from Toda whose rulers had joined Sadulla Khan in the siege of Chittor. He ransacked the parganas of Malpura, Tonk, Sambhar and Chatsu and collected a huge booty and returned triumphantly to Udaipur.

Aurangzeb had scored a brilliant victory over Dara at Dharmetpur in April 1658. He followed it by another one at Samogarh which practically sealed Dara's fate. He occupied Agra on June 8, 1658. Rajsingh sent his son Sultansingh and uncle Arisingh to congratulate Aurangzeb. They met the new emperor at Salimpur on June 2, 1658.

Rajsingh also dispatched a sizable force to assist Aurangzeb. The new Emperor was so pleased with him that he allowed him to reestablish his authority over Dungarpur, Banswara and Devalia (Pratapgarh).

It is interesting to note that Rajsingh was the only ruler of a major Rajput State who had not only escaped unscathed but had also derived full advantage from the war of succession among the Mughal princes. He now basked in the glory of Aurangzeb. The honeymoon between the two, however, did not last long.

In 1660 AD Aurangzeb expressed his desire to Roopsingh, the Rathor ruler of Kisnghanagarh, to marry his daughter Charumati who was known for her beauty. The princess rejected the imperial offer. She wrote to Rajsingh to marry her or else she would commit suicide. Rajsingh responded the call even at the cost of incurring the displeasure of Aurangzeb. The emperor asked the explanation of Rajsingh as to how he had married the princess without his permission? Rajsingh explained that there was nothing unusual for a Rajput prince to marry the daughter of another Rajput prince. Aurangzeb was not satisfied. He deprived Rajsingh of Devalia as a mark of his displeasure<sup>1</sup>. The parting of ways between the emperor and the Maharana had begun.

Afraid of the anti-idolatry activities of Aurangzeb, Goswami Damodardas left Mathura alongwith the icon of 'Shri Nathji'. For three years he wandered from one place to the other for safety. The rulers of Kota and Jodhpur expressed their inability to provide shelter to the Goswami for fear of reprisal by Aurangzeb. Finally the Goswami approached Rajsingh. The Maharana did not disappoint him. Regardless of the consequences he constructed a temple near the village Sihad<sup>2</sup> on the bank of the Banas river and installed the icon on February 20, 1672 with due ceremony.

In April, 1679 Aurangzeb imposed Jaziya on Hindus. There was protest all over the country against this tax. Rajsingh sent a letter to the emperor condemning the tax in unequivocal terms<sup>3</sup>. Similar letter was, perhaps, also sent to the Emperor by Shivaji. As if all this was not enough.

1 Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod, p. 431-41.

2 The village is now a flourishing town named after Shrinathji (Nathdwara). It is an all India centre of Pusthi Margi Vaishnavas. In 1988 there was an agitation for entry of Harijans into the temple. The controversy was set at rest when Harijans, led by the State Chief Minister, S.C. Mathur, were formally admitted into the temple.

3 Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod Part II, p. 463.

to annoy Aurangzeb, Rajsingh provided shelter to Ajitsingh, the posthumous son of Maharaja Jaswantsingh of Jodhpur whose State Aurangzeb had forfeited on his death at Jamrud

Aurangzeb felt that it was time to teach Rajsingh a lesson. He left Delhi on September 15, 1678 at the head of a large army and reached Ajmer on October 7. From there he marched towards Udaipur. In the way his sons Akbar and Azam also joined him. When the Maharana heard of the Emperor's expedition, he called his war council and decided upon the strategy to be employed against the mighty emperor. The Maharana organised his Rajput and Bhil warriors into small guerrilla units and posted them at a number of strategic points. The direct confrontation with the Mughal army was to be avoided as far as possible. Udaipur and villages around it were vacated. Maharana himself shifted to the hilly areas of Bhomat.

The Mughal army occupied Udaipur and Chittor and destroyed a number of temples. It also captured Pur, Mandal, Mandalgarh, Neemuch and Rajnagar but could not penetrate into the interior. It suffered heavily at the hands of the guerrillas on several fronts. Aurangzeb left Mewar in disgust and returned to Ajmer on March 22, 1680.

The Mughal princes Azam, Muazam and Akbar continued their tortuous campaign against Mewar and Marwar. The success was however, limited. In the meanwhile Rajsingh suddenly breathed his last at Oda in pargana Kumbhalgarh on October 22, 1680. He was said to have been poisoned as a result of palace intrigues.

Rajsingh was undoubtedly one of the greatest rulers Mewar had produced. He was not only a great warrior but also a master strategist. When the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan started, he kept Dara and Aurangzeb on tenterhooks and came in open support of Aurangzeb only when it became clear that he was the winning horse. He exploited his newly found friendship with Aurangzeb to the fullest extent and recovered his territory earlier lost to the Mughals. He also succeeded in establishing his authority over the principalities of Dungarpur, Banswara, Sirohi, etc.

Rajsingh was fully conscious of the prestige of Mewar established by his distinguished predecessors. Whenever, therefore, the honour of Mewar was at stake, he did not hesitate to take up cudgels with the emperor regardless of the consequences. His rushing to Kishangarh to marry Charumati at her distress call, his providing shelter to Goswami



Damodardas and Maharaja Ajitsingh of Jodhpur at the cost of inviting wrath of Aurangzeb are instances in point.

### **A great builder**

Mewar had enjoyed peace continuously for more than two decades during the reign of Rajsingh, a rare phenomena during those turbulent days indeed. The state coffers were full partly because of the collection of booty by Rajsingh in the course of his raids in the imperial territory. The result was that large scale construction activity took place in the State. Apart from several tanks, stepwells, temples and palaces, Rajsingh built the famous Rajsamand lake by daming the river Gomati at a cost of Rs.1.05 crore. Built more than three centuries ago, the dam is considered an engineering feat even according to modern standards. Not a drop of water has passed through the dam as seepage since it was completed in 1676 AD. Incidentally the project helped employ 60,000 labour at a time when the State was in the grip of continuous drought during 1661-66AD.

Maharana's personality was a complex one. He was religious and generous and yet at times he displayed extreme anger and cruelty. He murdered Udaibhan Barath on a minor provocation. He also murdered one of his wives, his son Sultansingh and a Purohit on suspicion of their involvement in a conspiracy against him. His another son, Sardarsingh, committed suicide in mysterious circumstances.

### **Coup against Aurangzeb**

Jaisingh succeeded his father Rajsingh in October, 1680 in the midst of the Mughal campaign against Mewar. Determined to bring it to a speedy end, Aurangzeb sent further reinforcement to his son Akbar from his Ajmer head-quarters. Akbar captured Jheelwara but could not advance further because of disruption of the supply lines and sporadic attacks by the guerrillas. Aurangzeb became impatient and conveyed his displeasure to Akbar for the slow progress of the campaign. In the meanwhile Maharana Jaisingh and Durgadas Rathor conveyed to Akbar that they were prepared to throw all their weight in his favour in case he staged a coup against his father. Akbar, who was annoyed by his father, succumbed to the offer. He declared himself as emperor on January 1, 1681.

After wasting quite a few days in celebrating his "coronation", Akbar set out for Ajmer at the head of an army of 70,000 which included 40,000 Rajputs of Mewar and Marwar. He camped at Deorai, a few kms.

away from Ajmer. Aurangzeb realised that with the limited force at his disposal he could hardly meet the challenge of Akbar supported by Jaisingh and Durgadas. A brilliant idea occurred in his fertile brain. He addressed a letter to Akbar in which he showered praise on him for roping in 40,000 Rajputs "in accordance with his instructions". He "advised" him that he should post the Rajputs on the front line of his army so that they could be sandwiched between the Mughal army on both sides and liquidated. He got the letter delivered in the Rajput Camp. The Rajputs felt that they had been cheated by Akbar. They not only deserted Akbar but also deprived his army of their belongings. In the state of confusion, some of Akbar's generals and army men crossed over to Aurangzeb. Akbar thus lost the battle even before it started. When the real facts came to light Durgadas and other Rajput leaders realised that they had been duped by Aurangzeb. It was, however, too late. Poor Akbar fled to south and took shelter with Chhatrapati Sahuji.

Having failed in his strategy to put Akbar on the Mughal throne, Jaisingh now sought peace with Aurangzeb. According to the settlement reached, the Maharana had to handover the parganas of Pur, Mandal and Badnor to the Emperor in lieu of 'Jaziya'. He had also to assure him that he would no more help the Rathors of Jodhpur. The young Maharaja Ajitsingh, whom the late Maharana Rajsingh had given shelter, had to be shifted to Sirohi.

In 1687 the Maharana laid the foundation stone of Jaisamand. The 1254 feet long and 105 feet wide dam was constructed on the river Gomati. Completed in 1691, Jaisamand was supposed to be one of the largest man-made lakes in the world.

On Maharana's death in October 1698, his son Amarsingh II ascended the throne. The latter took over at a time when Mewar's prestige was at the lowest ebb. The nobility was divided. The southern principalities of Dungarpur, Banswara and Deolia had become independent of Mewar and had established direct relationship with the Mughals. He despatched army to Dungarpur and Banswara and re-established Mewar's supremacy over them.

### **Liberation of Amber & Jodhpur**

The death of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb on February 21, 1707 A.D. was followed by a war of succession amongst his sons. In the battle of Jajua, which took place on June 8, 1707, Ajitsingh and Sawai Jaisingh lined up with Azam while Amarsingh sided with Mauzam.

Mauzam defeated Azam. He occupied the Mughal throne in the name of Bahadurshah. The new emperor was now determined to teach Ajitsingh and Jaisingh a lesson. He advanced towards Amber. Jaisingh surrendered his capital without even a symbolic resistance. The emperor sent forces under Mahrab Khan to Jodhpur and himself camped at Ajmer. Mehrab Khan captured Merta and Jodhpur.

Bahadurshah reached Merta on February 10, 1708. Here Ajitsingh and Durgadas met him. Ajitsingh apologised to the emperor for his "lapses" and requested him for the restoration of his principality. The emperor granted him 'mansab' and also permitted him to use the title of 'Maharaja' but was evasive on the question of return of his jagir. The emperor left for south to quell the revolt of his younger brother Kambux. He took Jaisingh, Ajitsingh and Durgadas with him to ensure that they did not create any trouble during his absence in the south.

The two rulers made persistent requests to Bahadurshah to return their respective 'jagirs' to them. They, however, failed in their efforts. Disappointed, they got into touch with Maharana Amarsingh. They quickly left the emperor's camp at Mandleswar on the bank of the Narmada and reached Udaipur on May 2, 1708. When the emperor heard of the escape of the two rulers, Jahandarshah, the elder son of Bahadurshah, wrote to the Maharana that he should not give shelter to the fugitives and that he should advise them to submit their apology to the emperor for their lapses so that he could persuade the emperor to return their jagirs to them. The two rulers sent their apologies to the emperor accordingly. There was, however, no response from the emperor<sup>1</sup>.

The three rulers viz. Amarsingh, Ajitsingh and Jaisingh now formed a mini confederacy to meet the challenge of the Mughal emperor. It was suggested that the Mughals should be turned out of India and the Maharana should takeover as emperor. The farsighted Maharana overruled the suggestion as he felt that the proposal would create jealousy amongst the Rajput rulers. He advised them that in-stead of dreaming of throwing out the Mughals from India, they should address themselves to the restoration of Jodhpur and Amber from the Mughals<sup>2</sup>. The Maharana placed his forces at the disposal of the two rulers for the purpose. Jaisingh, Ajitsingh and Durgadas, accompanied by the Mewar forces under the command of Kayasth Shyamal Das, attacked Marwar. Jodhpur was

1. Shyamaldas, *Ibid*, p. 773-74.

2. Shyamaldas, *Ibid*, p. 772

liberated and Ajitsingh was reinstalled on the Marwar throne on July 4, 1708<sup>1</sup>. A contingent of the Mewar army and other forces led by Dewan Ram Chandra captured Amber. In the meanwhile the Maharana occupied Pur, Mandal and Mandalgarh which had been in the Mughal possession since the reign of Maharana Jaisingh. Bahadurshah not only acquired in the action of the Maharana but also issued firmans in favour of Ajitsingh and Jaisingh confirming them as rulers of Marwar and Amber respectively on Maharana's advice.

During his stay at Udaipur, Jaisingh made persistent requests to Amarsingh to marry his daughter Chandra Kumari to him. Amarsingh had his reservations in the matter particularly because the Amber family had given their daughters to the Mughals. He, however, agreed to the proposal in the interest of the newly found unity amongst them subject to the conditions that the girl born to Chandra Kumari would not be given in marriage to the Mughals and that the boy born to her would be the heir apparent to the Amber throne irrespective of his seniority. The marriage was performed. In later years the non-compliance of the second condition by Jaisingh caused prolonged confrontation between the two houses. The Marahatas fully exploited the situation and caused havoc in both the States.

Amarsingh II died on December 22, 1710. In the short span of 12 years of his reign he not only recovered his own territory from the Mughals but also saw that Marwar and Amber were restored to their respective rulers. The unity forged by him among the major ruling houses of Rajasthan kept Bahadurshah always on the tenterhooks.

Amarsingh introduced some far reaching reforms in the feudal system of Mewar. He stopped transferring Jagir-holders from one Jagir to the other thereby bringing stability to the system. He reorganised the parganas as administrative units. He built the famous Bari Mahal at Udaipur.

Amarsingh II was succeeded by his son Sangramsingh II at the age of 20. The Mughal emperor Bahadurshah wanted to test the mettle of the young Maharana. He conferred the pargana of Mandalgarh on Rao Iadarsingh of Nagaur and the parganas of Pur and Mandal on Rajab Khan Mewati. While the Rao declined the offer for fear of reprisal by the Maharana, Rajab Khan set out to take possession of the parganas with the help of the Mughal army. The Mewar forces met him on the bank of the river Khari near Hurda and defeated him.

1. Shyamaldas, *Ibid.*, p. 774-775.

Bahadurshah died in February 1712. The subsequent emperors fell in quick succession because of court intrigues till Mohamad Shah succeeded the Mughal throne in 1719 AD. Maharaja S. Jaisingh of Amber and Maharaja Ajitsingh of Jodhpur became main pillars of the Mughal empire during his reign. Maharana Sangramsingh took full advantage of his relationship with Jaisingh and managed to secure Mughal firmans for Rampura, Dungarpur, Banswara and Deolia. He also annexed a part of territory of Idar. The Maharana died in January 1734 leaving behind a State bigger than he had inherited.

### **Anti-Marahata summit**

Jagatsingh II succeeded Sangramsingh II at a critical juncture in the history of India when the process of disintegration of the Mughal empire had accelerated. The Marahatas occupied Malwa and Gujarat and were on the door-steps of Rajasthan. The rulers of Jaipur, Jodhpur, Kota, Bundi, Karauli, Kishangarh etc. met at Hurda (Mewar) under the leadership of Jagatsingh on July 17, 1734 to decide upon the strategy against the Marahatas. On the conclusion of the summit the rulers in a joint statement declared that they should reassemble alongwith their armed forces at Rampura at the end of the rainy season with a view to put an end to the growing Marahata menace. The anti-Marahata alliance reminded the Rajput confederacy formed under Rana Sanga in 1527 AD. against Babur, the founder of the Mughal empire in India. The confederacy fought Babur at Khanwa with all its might. It was another matter that it lost the battle. The anti-Marahata alliance, however, turned out to be a damp squib. The ambition of S.Jaisingh to establish his own hegemony in the region and the age old suspicion amongst the leading Rajput houses against each other led to its collapse even before the ink of the statement had dried. Jagat Singh himself proved unequal to the task and did nothing to save the alliance. The consequences were disastrous for Rajasthan as also for the country.

### **Mewar-Jaipur relations**

S.Jaisingh died in 1743 A.D. Iswarisingh, the elder son of S.Jaisingh, succeeded him. His step brother, Madhosingh, staked his claim on the Kachhava throne in accordance with the undertaking given by S.Jaisingh to Maharana Amarsingh II at the time of former's marriage with Chandra Kumari in 1700 A.D. Maharana Jagatsingh naturally supported Madhosingh's claim.

The Mewar forces together with those of Rao Durjanshal of Kota assembled at Jamoli. Iswarisingh too marched towards Mewar and

camped at Pander. Wisdom, however, prevailed on both sides at the last moment. Iswarisingh agreed to confer the jagir of Toda and Tonk worth Rs 5 lakhs on Madhosingh, though neither Madhosingh nor Durjanshal were happy with this agreement. The confrontation between Mewar and Jaipur continued.

In October 1748 Jagatsingh secured the help of Marahatas (Holkar) against Iswarisingh. A battle was fought at Bagru between Mewar, Kota and the Holkar on one hand and Jaipur on the other. Iswarisingh was defeated. He agreed to grant 4 parganas to Madhosingh, restored Bundi to its rightful owner Ummedsingh and promised to pay a huge sum to the Marahatas. Soon after the settlement Iswarisingh got his able minister Keswadas Khatri murdered on suspicion of his being pro-Marahata. The Marahata leader Malhar Rao Holkar led his army against Jaipur. Finding himself unable to defend, Iswarisingh committed suicide. The Marathas put Madhosingh on the Jaipur throne. The grateful Madhosingh granted Rampura to the Marahatas. It may be recalled that the Rampura pargana had been granted to Madhosingh by Maharana Sangramsingh II in 1728 A.D.

Jagatsingh died on June 5, 1751. He is credited with having built the famous 'Jag Nivas' palace in the Pichhola lake at Udaipur. One of the unfortunate events in his life was his confrontation with his elder son Pratapsingh. The latter remained in the protective custody from 1743 AD till Jagatsingh's death. The reign of Pratapsingh II and that of Rajsingh II was not of much consequence except that the intrusion of the Marahatas in the Mewar territory continued unabated.

### **Civil-war**

Arisingh succeeded Rajsingh II who died in April, 1761 without an issue. He annoyed most of his chiefs and nobles by his behaviour. He got his uncle Nathusingh murdered. He also took the life of Rawat Jodhsingh of Salumber by administering poison. In 1763 AD Malhar Rao Holker came to Mewar to recover the dues on account of 'Khiraj'. The Maharana was obliged to pay him Rs 51 lakhs. Soon the Maharana had to face another serious problem. Jhala Jaswant Singh of Gogunda produced one Ratan Singh as the "posthumous son" of Rajsingh II. Since most of the chiefs were unhappy with the Maharana, they readily rallied round the pretender. Ratansingh occupied Kumbhalgarh and started functioning as a parallel ruler of Mewar.

Arisingh recruited Sindhi muslims in the army to meet the threat of the pretender. Ratansingh secured the help of Madhav Rao Sindhia

for ousting Arisingh from the throne on the promise of payment of Rs 1.25 crore. Sindhia laid the seige to Udaipur which continued for six months. In the meanwhile Arisingh succeeded in winning over Sindhia to his side. The seige was lifted. Maharana paid Rs 25 lakhs in cash and jewellery to Sindhia. He mortgaged the parganas of Jawad, Neemuch, Jeeran and Morvan to him pending payment of the balance of the amount. These territories were lost to the Marahatas (Sindhias) for ever.

The Maharana captured Chittorgarh from the supporters of Ratansingh. He handed over the pargana of Godwar to Maharaja Vijaysingh of Jodhpur for dislogging Ratansingh from the fort of Kumbhalgarh. Vijaysingh took possession of Godwar but failed to capture Kumbhalgarh. Jodhpur, however, never returned Godwar to Mewar. The Maharana was killed in 1773 by Ajitsingh Hada of Bundi during a hunting expedition. Mewar lost lot of valuable territory during his 12 year rule.

### **Ram Pyari's rule**

Hamirsingh succeeded Arisingh at the age of 12. His powers were exercised by a slave girl Ram Pyari on behalf of the Regent, Rajmata Sardar Kunwar. An army unit, known as "Ram Pyari-ka - Rishala", was directly under her command. She cleared the way for her absolute rule in the State by having the Pradhan, Amarchand Sanadhya, eliminated<sup>1</sup>.

Ratansingh was still in the possession of Kumbhalgarh. One of his supporters, Meghsingh of Begun, had occupied some parganas of the State. Ram Pyari invited Madhav Rao Sindhiya and got these parganas vacated from Meghsingh. This gave further rise to the Marahata activity in the State. The pargana of Nimaheda had to be given to the Marahata ruler, Ahilyabai Holkar of Indore. Hamirsingh died at an early age of 17 in 1778 in suspicious circumstances without any issue.

The conditions in Mewar had become almost chaotic during Hamirsingh's reign. Between 1751 and 1778 A.D. Mewar had not only lost fertile territory worth an annual revenue of Rs 28.50 lakhs to the Marahatas but had also to pay them a staggering sum of Rs 1.81 crore making the State-exchequer bankrupt<sup>2</sup>. The Chundawats and the Shaktawats, who had been the mainstay of the Shisodiya rulers for quite some generations, were locked in internecine struggle. No wonder, it was with great reluctance that the Rajmata Sardar Kunwar agreed to put her only surviving son Bhimsingh on the throne.

1. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod. p. 1602.

2. Shyamaldas, Ibid, p. 1704-5.

The new Maharana invited the Marahata leader Madhav Rao Sindhia to help solve his problems. The Marahatas were ever ready to fish in the troubled waters. The Maharana succeeded in capturing Chittor from Chundawats and dislodging Ratansingh from Kumbhalgarh with the help of Sindhia. He had, however, to pay a huge amount to him in lieu of the military assistance rendered by him. By now the East India Company was after the Marahatas. Pressed hard in the south of the Narmada, the Marahatas entered Mewar and plundered the territory with impunity. They also extracted lakhs of rupees from the Maharana and his chiefs.

### **Krishnakumari episode**

As if all this was not enough, a controversy revolving round the engagement of Krishna Kumari, the daughter of Bhimsingh, led to confrontation amongst the rulers of Mewar, Jaipur and Jodhpur. The Marathas and their henchmen, the Pindaris, exploited the situation and extracted lakhs of rupees from the three States. Ultimately the Maharana administered poison to Krishna Kumari at the behest of the Pindari leader Amir Khan in July 1810. The unfortunate princess died instantaneously.

During the reign of Bhimsingh, Mewar had to pass through the worst period in its history. While the Marahatas and the Pindaris were engaged in loot and plunder of Mewar, Zalamsingh Jhala, the Dewan of Kota, was manipulating for the annexation of the parganas of Kherad and the fort of Mandalgarh. The famine of 1812 took its own toll. The Maharana had to sell the palace jewellery to feed the inmates of the palace<sup>1</sup>. According to Col. Tod, the population of Udaipur was reduced from 50,000 to 13,000. The Maharana had a total force of 50 sowars only. The chiefs (Jagirdars) could not afford to maintain even a horse. The wheat was sold at the rate of seven seers a rupee which the common man could hardly afford<sup>2</sup>.

### **Surrender to British**

With the beginning of nineteenth century the British East India Company had been spreading its tentacles in Rajasthan States. Surrounded by innumerable problems, the Maharana entered into what is called a 'subsidiary alliance' with the Company. He agreed to pay 'Khiraj' in lieu of the protective umbrella provided by the Company. It was nothing short of surrender. The Maharana purchased peace for himself and his subjects realising little that he was mortgaging the future of his State and that of India to an alien power which ruled over India

1. Shyamal Das, *Ibid*, p. 1743-44

2. Shyamal Das, *Ibid*, p. 1743-44



for the next 130 years in the most despotic manner. The Maharana died on March 30, 1828.

### **The Society**

Mewar had enjoyed religious freedom since ages. Though the Shishodia rulers worshipped Eklingji (Lord Shiva), they had equal respect for other religions. The icons of "Jain Teerthankars" and the inscription of "Allah" appearing side by side with the Hindu gods and goddesses on the Kirti Stambh (1440-48) confirms the secular character of Rana Kumbha. The followers of Jainism (Oswals) held posts of Pradhans, ministers and army commanders from generation to generation. They were allowed to build temples even on the legendary fort of Chittor. Rana Pratap, who fought a prolonged and bitter war against the Mughal emperor Akbar, had Hakim Khan Soor, a Muslim, as one of his senior commanders in the battle of Halighati. When Mughal emperor Jahangir was annoyed with his son Khurram, the latter took shelter with Maharana Karansingh. Both of them exchanged their turbans as a symbol of brotherhood. Obviously the Maharanas never allowed factors of caste, community or religion in dealing with their friends as well as subjects.

With all the liberal attitude of the rulers the society in Mewar was as much caste ridden as elsewhere in Rajasthan or for that matter in India. Amongst the Hindus, the most prominent were the Rajputs. They shed their blood for generations in the cause of their masters i.e. the rulers and were awarded jagirs in recognition of their services. Naturally they commanded more respect than any other community in the State. The Chauhans, the Panwars, the Jhalas, the Rathods, the Solankhies, the Bhatias, and the Gaurs were other major clans of Rajputs in the State. There were a number of sub-clans in each clan.

After the Rajputs, the Brahmins formed a large segment of the society. The Brahmins like other major communities were divided into several sub-castes such as Daima, Gaur, Parik, Saraswat, Nagar etc. Since they presided on all religious ceremonies like marriage and death, they commanded respect in the society. They ran chatshalas (elementary schools) to teach three 'R's to the children from the Rajput, Brahmin and Vaishya communities on nominal tuition fee. The boys from the Brahmin community were also sent to Kashi where they studied Vedas and Upnishads. The Maharanas and the Jagirdars had appointed their "Purohits" from amongst the Brahmins. Some of them held important posts in the State. There were thousands of Brahmin families which enjoyed "maufi" land on hereditary basis.

The Vaishya community was engaged largely in trade as its very name indicated. Some of them served the rulers as well. There were Oswals, Agarwals, Sarawagis, Maheshwaris and others who were part of this community. The important posts of Pradhans, Ministers, Hakims in the State were generally manned by the Oswals. Others, who took to Government jobs, were Kayasthas.

The Jats, Gujars and Dhakars constituted a formidable agricultural community. Even the land owned by Rajputs, Vaishyas and Brahmins was cultivated by these communities on "sizara" (partnership) basis. The Gujars were good cattle breeders. The carpenters, the gold-smiths and the black-smiths constituted small professional groups which served the village community as a whole. The women in the farming communities worked in the fields hand in hand with their men folk.

The scheduled castes consisted of Chamars, Balais, Bhambhis Regars, Dhobis, Mehatars (sweepers) etc. Strangely enough except the sweepers the other castes did not suffer from untouchability in the State to the extent they did elsewhere. The Chamars and Regars made 'charas' and shoes and tanned animal skin. The Balais and Bhambhis were good weavers. They manufactured coarse cloth such as reja, reji etc. on job basis for their clients. The Dhobis washed the clothes of the village community. The scheduled caste people cultivated land as crop-sharers or sub-tenants. Only a few of them held land.

Amongst the Scheduled tribes were the Bhils, the Grasias and the Meenas. The entire south-western part of Mewar was inhabited by the Bhils. The Meenas lived in Jahajpur and Mandalgarh parganas. The Scheduled tribes were the original inhabitants of the State. The advent of Rajput rule in Mewar pushed them into forests and to the hilly areas.

### **The status of women**

The women in Mewar suffered more than their counterparts in other parts of India during the medieval period following the advent of Muslim rule in the country. The Hindu women particularly those of the 'upper' castes were made to observe purda. They were also victims of the traditions of polygamy and sati. Besides, on quite a few occasions, thousands of woman had to commit 'Johar' (mass immolation), when their valiant husbands undertook the "do and die" mission as a last resort in defence of their mother land. In some communities female infanticide was resorted to<sup>1</sup>. Widow marriage was forbidden in the so called Dwija castes.

1. Shyamaladad Veer Vinod Par., I. p. 200

Polygamy was prevalent practically in all castes and communities. However, only such persons married more than one woman who could afford this luxury. Since inter-caste marriages were a taboo, persons wanting to have women from castes other than their own could keep them as paswans or concubines. Ironically, the polygamy came to be regarded as a status-symbol in the society.

Contrary to general belief self indulgence was not the only cause of polygamy. The affluent farmer needed more hands in agricultural operations. He, therefore, married more than one woman. The proposition was perhaps found to be cheaper than hiring labour. The Rajputs were a martial race. They believed in having a clanish army rather than a mercenary one. Mewar had to fight a number of bloody wars during the Mughal period. They, therefore, needed to grow more and more children so that when one generation of Rajputs fell in the battle field another promptly took over. Hence the justification for polygamy amongst them.

A factor which contributed to the polygamous marriages amongst the rulers was the use of marriage as an instrument of diplomacy. There are quite a few examples when a ruler married the daughter of another ruler either to put an end to an age old rivalry between the two houses or to seek military assistance against the third party. Some time a prince gave his daughter to another prince as a symbol of acceptance of the overlordship of the latter. The number of wives (Ranis) of some of the Maharanas are given below

	Name	Number of Wives
1.	Udaisingh II	20
2.	Pratap	11
3.	Amarsingh I	26
4.	Rajsingh I	19
5.	Bhimsingh	17

Though the earliest evidence of the sati practice in India dates back to 570 AD<sup>1</sup>, it seems that it came to Mewar several centuries later. Shyamaldas's *Veer Vinod* is considered as an authentic work on Mewar. The first reference to Sati in his celebrated work is dated 1382 A.D., when on Maharana Kheta's death his Hadi queen committed sati. As

1. Romila Thapar, *A History of India*, I, p.152

many as 16 ladies of the *zanana* burnt themselves on the pyre of the valiant prince Prithviraj, when he died in 1500 AD on the Kumbhalgarh fort. On the death of Maharana Amarsingh I in October 1620, 27 women, which included 10 Ranis, 9 *khawas* (*paswans*) and 8 *sahelis* committed *sati*. In 1773, a *khawas* committed *sati* on the pyre of Maharana Arisingh who died at Amargarh. Later on when the news of the Maharana's death reached Udaipur, two of his Ranis and 3 *paswans* committed *sati* with the turban of the late Maharana.

A study of the *sati* practice in Mewar reveals some interesting features. Though sporadic incidents of *sati* had taken place from time to time in various communities, the *sati* was mainly practised in the landed aristocracy and the ruling family of Shishodias. But even among them it was not a regular practice. Nor was it considered a prestige symbol as will be apparent from the fact that not a single woman had committed *sati* on the pyre of some of the illustrious rulers such as Kumbha, Sanga, Pratap or Rajsingh I.

### **The feudal system**

The Jagirdari system had come into being in Mewar along with the institution of monarchy. The rulers granted "Jagirs" in the form of land/villages to their kinsmen, army commanders and other high functionaries from time to time. The jagirs were inalienable and subject to the holders rendering military and other services to the State as and when required. Besides, the rulers had the inherent right to forfeit any jagir in their discretion.

The holders of jagirs, known as Jagirdars, collected land revenue and enjoyed unfettered powers of imposing taxes and *lag-bags* over their subjects. The big Jagirdars also dispensed justice to the litigant public within their jurisdiction. Taking advantage of the continuous struggle between the Maharanas and the central powers during the medieval period, the Jagirdars further consolidated their position. Their voice in matters of state such as war and peace and succession to the Mewar throne was decisive as would be apparent from the few instances quoted below :

- (1) In 1535 AD when it came to light that Udaisingh, the rightful claimant to the Mewar throne, was alive, the nobility (Jagirdars) removed Banbeer and put Udaisingh on the throne.

- (2) In 1572 Udaisingh nominated one of his younger sons, Jagmal, as his successor ignoring the claim of his eldest son Pratap. Jagmal ascended the throne accordingly soon after the death of Udaisingh. The nobility asserted itself. It removed Jagmal from the throne and put Pratap in his place.
- (3) In 1615 it was under the pressure of the nobility that Maharana Amarsingh I accepted the overlordship of the Mughals and put an end to the prolonged struggle with the Mughals dating back to 1527.

Following in the foot-steps of the Mughal emperor Jahangir, Maharana Amarsingh I introduced the system of reshuffling the jagirs from time to time. The Jagirdars expressed their resentment against the new system. It was, however, not until the beginning of the 18th century that Maharana Amarsingh II discontinued it. He classified the Jagirdars into Solahs, Battisas and Goals and fixed their seats in the court according to their status. He also fixed the period of service (Chakari) and 'rekh' (Khiraj) in respect of each jagir<sup>1</sup>.

Originally there were 16 Jagirdars in the first category. Hence they were known as Solahs (Sixteen). Though the number increased to 24 subsequently, the category continued to be known as "Solahs". According to the recorded history Jhala Sinha was the first recipient of jagir in this category in 1527 AD. Rana Sanga had conferred the jagir of Badisadari on Sinha in recognition of the services of his father Jhala Ajjah of Halwad (Gujarat). Ajjah had commanded the Mewar army and attained martyrdom after Sanga was seriously injured and removed from the battle field of Khanwa. The last one to be admitted to this exclusive club was Chundawat Ajeetsingh of Asind, who played a notable role in dealing with the Marahatas in the early nineteenth century.

The second category of Jagirdars was called "Battisas" (Thirty-two) as their number was 32. The rest were known as "Goals". Nearly two third of Mewar was in possession of the Jagirdars at the time Mewar signed the treaty of "friendship" (Dosti London) with the East India Company in 1818.

An inferior class of Jagirdars was that of "Bhomiya". The Rajputs were granted land as "Bhom" for rendering some sort of police duties to the village community. They were also required to do military duty in times of war. They paid a nominal tax known as "Bhombard" as a token

1. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod Vol.II, p. 789.

of their allegiance to the ruler. Then there were "Manufiders" who were given land by way of charity. Unlike Jagirdars the Manufidars were not to render any military or civil service. The holders of the maufi lands were generally Brahmins, Pundas and Charans.

### **The Shresthis**

The Shresthis made significant contribution not only to trade and commerce but also to art and culture of Mewar during the medieval period. They were leaders of the prosperous Jain community. The rulers honoured them by conferring the title of "Jagat seth" or "Nagar seth" for their services to the State and the society.

During the period of Rawal Jaitrasingh (1213-52 AD) Shresthi Ralha made a mark as "Sanghpati". He conducted several Sangh yatra (Community pilgrimage) and held "Diksha mahotsav"<sup>1</sup> at Chittor. The book 'Karam Vipak' was written at his instance. Interestingly the book throws light on the economic conditions of Mewar. The State enjoyed prosperity during this period according to the book. In the course of the visit of the Jain saint Jinprabodsuri to Chittor in 1227 AD, Shresthi Dhandhal installed several icons of Jain Teerthankars. He constructed Dev-kulikas in the Shantinath temple and completed the "Shringar Chanwari temple" at Chittor. The latter is known for its architectural beauty.

The famous Kirtistambh at Chittor was built by Shresthi Jija Bagherwal, though it was completed by his son Punyasingh by the end of the 13th century. Jija also constructed Jain temples at several places including Chittor. It was because of the influence of the Shresthis that Chittor became a great centre of Jainism during the rule of Maharawal Tejsingh. Tejsingh's own wife Jayalatadevi constructed the temple of Shyam Parswanath in 1278 AD at Chittor. The eminent Jain saints and scholars like Ratnaprabh Suri and Praduman Suri made Chittor their headquarters and produced several works on Jainism.

Allauddin Khilji had captured Chittor in 1300 AD. The fort remained in the possession of the Sultanate of Delhi till 1337 when Rana Hamir reoccupied it<sup>2</sup>. During this period the temple of Rishabhdeo (Dhuleo) was damaged. Shresthi Hardan got it repaired in 1374.

1. R.V. Somani, History of Mewar I, p.107.

2. R.V. Somani, Ibid, p.107

Shresthi Ramdeo Nawalka of Delwara (Udaipur) served as Pradhan successively of three Maharanas, namely Khetsingh, Lakha and Mokai. He organised a Diksha mahotsave at Karera in 1374. One of his sons Sahara installed an icon of a Jain Teerthankar at Delwara and another son Sarang installed a nine feet high icon of 'Adbudji' at Nagada. Nawalkhas also constructed the Chaugan Jain temple at Udaipur during the rule of Maharana Arisingh. During the reign of Rana Lakha, Pragwat Nana built the Shantinath temple at Zawar mines according to an inscription of 1421 AD.

Shresthi Gunraj was an important businessman of Chittor who conducted a Sangh yatra and thus earned the title of Sanghpati. Dharana Shah, the builder of the Ranakpur temple, was a member of his Sangh. Gunraj renovated the temple of Mahavir at Chittor. Shresthi Dhama Shah migrated from Sirohi to Madar (Mewar) at the invitation of Maharana Kumbha. He built the world famous Jain temple complex at Ranakpur now in Pali district.

Karma Shah of Chittor renovated the temple of Shatrunga after obtaining a fireman from the Sultan of Gujarat, Bahadurshah. The Sultan had been earlier obliged by Karma Shah when the former as heir apparent was in financial difficulties.

Bharmall, a scion of a wealthy Kawaria family of Delhi was appointed as 'Kiledar' of Ranthambhor. His son, Bhama Shah, the well known soldier-statesman, had served Maharana Pratap as Pradhan. Bhama Shah presented a purse worth several lakhs of rupees to Pratap at a time when the Maharana was in the midst of serious financial crisis due to his prolonged war with Akbar and earned the gratitude of the House of Shishodias. His brother Tara Chand also served Pratap as his general and minister. Bhama Shah's son Jiwa Shah and latter on his son Akheraj served as 'Pradhans' of the Maharanas of Mewar.

Singavi Dayalshah constructed a Chaturmukhi Jain temple known as 'Dayalshah ka Dewara' in 1675 at Rajsamand during the reign of Maharana Rajsingh. Mehta Agarchand, who had fled from Bikaner and taken shelter in Mewar in 1613, served as Kiledar of Mandalgarh. His successors Devichand, Shersingh, Gukulchand and Pannalal served as Pradhans of Mewar.

### **The Bhil tribe**

According to anthropologists, the term "Bhil" is derived from the Tamil word "Bil" or "Billu" which means arrow. Since the members of the tribe moved with an arrow and a bow, they came to be known as Bils or Bhils.

The scholars still differ on the point as to whether the Bhils were aboriginals or migrated to India like the Aryans, the Huns and the Gurjars. There is, however, unanimity amongst them that the Bhils had settled in India long before the Aryans came to this country. The earliest reference to this tribe is found in the Ramayan and the Mahabharat.

There is a story in the Ramayan that a Bhil damsel, Shabari, entertained Rama with berries during the latter's exile. From the Mahabharat we learn how a Bhil lad Eklavya had mastered archery to the consternation of Dronacharya who trained Kaurvas and Pandwas in the art of warfare. It seems that the Bhils were driven to the Aravallis and the Vindhya hills by force of circumstances in the later centuries.

Be that as it may, the Bhils were the earliest settlers in Mewar and the adjoining hilly regions. When Guhaditya, the founder of the Guhil dynasty, left Anandpur (Gujarat) to seek his fortune, his first confrontation was with the Bhil leader Mandlik who ruled over Idar. He incurred the hostility of the local Bhils, when he killed Mandlik. He escaped to Bhomat (south-western part of Mewar) where two Bhil leaders, namely Baloo of Ogha and Deva of Undari gave him shelter. Guhaditya did not forget the services rendered by them while he was in wilderness. When he became the ruler of Vaghad and Bhomat, he conferred on them the privilege of putting 'Rajtilak' on his forehead with their blood on the occasion of his formally ascending the throne. This is how Guhaditya established friendship with the Bhils which proved invaluable to the Guhil dynasty of Mewar in future. The tradition of putting Rajtilak by the descendants of Baloo and Deva survived till Mewar was merged in Rajasthan after independence of the country from the British rule.

The Bhil population in Mewar was mainly concentrated in the parganas of Sarada (Magara), Girwa, Dhariyavad, Kherwara and Kotara (Bhomat). The Bhils lived in huts built with bamboo, wood and leaves. The huts were situated at a respectable distance from each other. The area around the hut was cultivated by the family living in it. A group of huts constituted a "fala" headed by a 'Mukhi' who was the arbiter of disputes amongst the inhabitants of the fala. A number of falas made a 'pal' or a village which was headed by a Gameti elected by consensus from among the Mukhias. Ordinarily the bravest amongst them would be elected to this coveted office. All civil, criminal and land disputes were decided by the Gameti in consultation with the pal-panchayat consisting of the Mukhias. For centuries the Mewar rulers had little say



in the affairs of the tribe. The unity among them was unique. Whenever there was some trouble in a fala, the inhabitants would send signals to the neighbouring falas by means of 'Kilkari'. They would cry "fai hai-fai hai" and the Bhils of the neighbouring areas would rush to the fala in hundreds in no time.

The Bhils in Mewar depended mainly on agriculture and forest produce for their livelihood. Their staple food was maize but they ate meat and mahuwa flower too. They produced their own beverage from the mahuwa and drunk to their hearts content without interference from the State authorities. The marriages were arranged but love marriages were not uncommon. The divorce was permissible. They indulged in loot and dacoities and charged "bolawa" tax from the travellers for their safe passage through the Bhil territory.

The Bhils claimed their ancestry to Mahadeo. Some of the clans amongst the Bhils claimed themselves as decendents of Rajputs. The Bhils long back became part of the Hindu society but did not hesitate to eat beef. They worshipped Mahadeo, Hanuman, Kalababa, Kali mata and several other gods. They also propitiated some of the lesser gods by sacrificing animals.

Conscious of the privilege of putting Rajtilak on the forehead of the Maharanas on the occasion of their succession to the throne, the Bhils were next only to Rajputs in shading blood for the defence of Mewar. But for the continuous onslaught through guerrilla warfare by the Bhils, it would have been almost impossible for the Maharanas to wage wars against the mighty Mughals for centuries.

Although the Bhils owed allegiance to the Maharanas, they were freedom loving people. The slightest encroachment on their freedom brought hostile reaction from them. They did not ask for any thing from the State nor would they countenance any interference from the State or the society in their way of life. History is replete with examples of their heroic resistance whenever the State tried to impose its will on them. No wonder they retained their customs, their culture and their way of life for centuries.

### **Art and architecture**

Mewar had a pride of place in the field of painting during the medieval period. It had not only influenced the art of the neighbouring States of Rajasthan but of Gujarat as well. From the evidence so far

available it appears that in Mewar the tradition of manuscript illustration preceded the mural tradition. The oldest illustrated work so far found is the "Kalpsutra" completed in 1150 AD. by Bhadrabahu Swami. The painting descended to the miniature surface of the palm leaf in the "Sawag Padikaman Sutt Chunni" composed at Ahar in 1250 AD, when Rawal Tejsingh ruled Mewar. Similar paintings are found in the "Supashana-chariyam" written at Delwara in 1391 AD and the "Kalpsutra" written in 1426 AD. The writers and the artists of all the above works were Jain monks. It was thus the Jain school of art on which the edifice of Mewar school was built.

With the production of Ragmala in 1605 at Chawand during the reign of Maharana Amarsingh I began a new era of painting in Mewar. The miniature paintings by Nisaradi in the 'Ragmala-set' depicted the folk art at its best. It was followed by the production of 'Nayika set' and the 'Rashikpriya set' in 1640, the illustrated Bhagwat Puran in 1648, the Honhar Ramayan in 1646 and the Arsh Ramayan in 1657. All these works relate to the reign of Maharana Jagatsingh. The paintings so far had been free from the Mughal influence. The Mughal art started influencing the Mewar School during the period of Maharana Karansingh. The wall painting in the Chhoti Chitarshali palace built by Karansingh and the Badi Chitrashali palace built by Sangramsingh II are the products of the synthesis of the two schools. It was during Sangramsingh's reign that the well known artist Jagnath produced the illustrated Satsayees, Geet Govind and Sundar Shrangar with miniature paintings. Side by side a new school known as the Nathdwara school of painting emerged. It was the product of the synthesis of the Mewar school and the Brij school. The Pichhawai paintings of Nathdwara became popular throughout India. The theme of these paintings was Krishna-leela.

The appearance of the Jain architecture in the thirteenth century AD in all its splendour enriched the architectural traditions of Mewar. A Jain Shresthi, Jija Bhagerwal, built a 22 metre high "Kirti Stambh" (tower of fame) on the fort of Chittor. A fine piece of architecture, the tower is covered with figures from Jain pantheon. About the same time the Jain temple Shrinagar Chanwari with fine carvings was built on the fort.

Maharana Kumbha (1433-1468) was a great builder and a patron of art. He took a cue from the Jain "Kirti Stambh" and built, a 37 metre high nine storied tower, also named as 'Kirti Stambh'. The Kirti Stambh

built by Kumbha is also called 'Jai Stambh' probably to distinguish from the Jain Kirte Stambh standing a few yards away from it. The legend that it was built by Kumbha to commemorate his victory over the Sultan of Gujarat is not corroborated by any reliable source. The tower is decorated with several icons of Hindu gods and goddesses and Jain Teerthankars. Interestingly in the third and the eighth story of the tower the name of "Allah" is also inscribed. No better example of the secular character of Kumbha's rule. The architectural ornamentation and profuse decoration of the tower is seen to be believed. The famous historian Fergusson has observed that the tower surpasses even Kutub Minar in design and execution. The architect Jaita was responsible for the planning and construction of the tower.

Kumbha's contribution in the fort architecture was unexceptional. He constructed as many as 32 forts and renovated a number of old ones for the defence of his State. He constructed the Kumbhalgarh fort over the debris of the ancient fort of Machindrapur. From the strategic point of view the fort commanded a unique position in the defence of Mewar. Kumbha carried out large scale renovation of the fort of Chittor. Formerly there was a direct route from the town to the fort. He constructed a circuitous route and added four gates making the fort almost impregnable. Each gate was turned into a line of defence during the wars.

The temple architecture also flourished during Kumbha's reign. The Ranakpur temple complex, a rare confluence of devotion and art, was constructed in Gorwar (then part of Mewar) by Dharnakshaha, a confidant of Rana Kumbha, at a cost of Rs 99 lakhs. Its construction was started in 1437 AD.<sup>1</sup> It was designed and executed by an architect, Deepa Sompura. It was consecrated in 1439 by the Jain saint Somsundar Soori, when the temple was still incomplete. The temple complex was dedicated to Adinath (Rishabha Deva).

The temple has four artistic entrances. In the sanctum sanctorum (Grabha-graha) there are four images of Adinath. These images face four different directions. One can thus have the darshan of Adinath from all the four sides. In the sanctuaries on the first and second floor are also enshrined four identical images. The domes and ceilings of the corner temples are replete with marvellous carvings depicting famous happenings of the past. The four ornate Meghnad-Mandaps are unique

1 R.V. Somani, 'Jain Inscriptions of Rajasthan', p.107

in their sculpture beauty. The forty feet high pillars dedicated with delicate carvings and the artistic torans suspended like ornaments studded with precious stones keep one spell bound. In the words of Dr. John Brazda. "What more any lover of beauty, grace and supreme artistry, can ask to see any where in the world"?

In 1651 Maharana Jagatsingh built the Jagdeesh temple at Udaipur at a cost of Rs 15.00 lakh. Though the Mughal architecture had started exercising its influence over the Rajput architecture a few decades back, this temple reflects the glory of the original Rajput or Mewar architecture. Besides the main temples referred to above, hundred of other Jain and Vaishnava temples were built in various parts of Mewar during the medieval period and each one of them reflected the traditions of the local culture and architecture. The main centres of these temples were Udaipur, Chittor and Delwara (Udaipur).

Mewar's contribution to the Indian sculpture was by no means insignificant. The Mewar sculpture reached its greatest heights in the expression of spiritual qualities through hundreds of icons of the Hindu gods and the Jain Tirthankars in the temples built all over the State during the medieval period. The Kirtimukha (Tower of Fame) built by Rana Kumbha (1433-1460) is a veritable text of Hindu iconography according to Dr. Geertz. The icons of Kumbha Swami installed in the Vishnu temples built by Kumbha at Chittor, Kumbhalgarh and Achalgarh added to the glory of the Mewar sculpture art. The Ranakpur temple complex, also built during the reign of Kumbha, has numerous icons of Jain Tirthankars but the four faced icon of Adinath in the main temple is a marvel of sculptors. The nine feet high marvellous icon of the Jain Tirthankar Shantinath (Adbudji) at Nagada (Udaipur), the three full sized icons of Jain Tirthankar at Banera and the black marble icon of Vishnu at the Jagdeesh temple, Udaipur continue to inspire the sculptors and the people alike. In the miniature sculpture art, one has to see the 'Nochowki' built by Maharana Rajsingh (1657-1707) at Rajnagar. Beautiful small icons of Hindu gods and goddesses have been carved in the marble chhatris built on the Nochowki on Rajasamand lake.

### **Literature**

During the early medieval period Mewar's contribution to literature was not very significant. Muhammad Jayasree, Baruji Soda,

Hem Ratna, Durshaji Adha etc. had composed versus in praise of the heroes and heroins of Mewar. It is, however, doubtful if any of them belonged to Mewar or received patronage of the rulers of Mewar.

The foremost amongst the rulers of Mewar, who extended patronage to literature was Maharana Kumbha. The Maharana himself was a no mean author. He composed 'Sangeet Raj', a brilliant exposition of the ancient Indian music in 1452. His other works were Rasik Priya, Sangeet-Karm-deepak, Sangeet Ratnakar etc. The scholars who adorned his court were Sutrdhar Mandan, author of several books on Indian architecture, Kanha Vyas, author of 'Ekling Mahatmya and Atre and Mahesh of Deshpura.

Meerabai, princess turned saint and poet, was born in Marwar but was married to the Mewar prince, Bhojraj, son of Rana Sanga in 1516. She became widow in 1523. She took to sanyas and spent rest of her life as a devotee of Lord Krishna. She composed thousands of devotional songs in praise of the Lord. These songs are sung all over the country even today.

Maharana Rajsingh (1652-80) was another ruler during whose reign the literature flourished. The well known historical works "Amar Kavya Vansawali" and "Raj Prashasti" were composed by Ranchor Bhatt, an eminent poet in the court of Rajsingh. The Prashasti inscribed on the Nochowki of Rajasamand is supposed to be the longest stone inscription so far discovered in the world.

The noted writer Sadashiv came from Banaras and joined the court of Rajsingh simply because his court was free from Mughal influence. His work 'Raj Ratnakar' in the Sanskrit throws light on the functioning of the court of Rajsingh. Jai Singh's Rajvilas, Kishordas's "Raj Prakash", Shrilal Bhatt's "Rajsingh Varanam" and Mukundas's "Rajsinghsatak" are other works written during the period of Rajsingh. Besides, the writers referred to above, who received patronage of Rajsingh, there were several Jain poets including Tejmundi, Maheshmundi, Padamvijaya, Kanakvigaya etc. who flourished in Mewar during this period.

It does not appear that Mewar made any further progress in the field of art and literature during the reign of subsequent rulers. In fact after the death of Maharana Rajsingh, the penetration of the Marathas

led to unsettled conditions in Mewar which continued till Mewar signed a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in 1818.

### **The Economy**

The Aravallies, which formed a long frontier between Mewar and Marwar, had been a decisive factor not only in the defence of Mewar but also in its economy. From Abu to Ajmer the almost unbroken chain of the Aravalli range<sup>1</sup> covered with dense forests<sup>2</sup> acted as a protective shield stalling the advance of the treacherous Thar desert towards the sprawling plateau of Mewar.

The western and southern hilly parts of the State were rich in forest wealth. The region produced teak-wood, bamboo and mahuwa in abundance. The main crop grown in the area was maize. The wild animals, who made the forests their habitat, were tiger, leopard, bear, cheetal, sambhar, deer, pig and jarakh. The area was predominantly populated by the Adivashis (Bhils, Grashias etc.) who depended for their livelihood on agriculture and forest produce. Though the Bhils always stood with the Maharanas of Mewar in their thick and thin, they were half naked and semi starved.

A number of rivers, namely, the Chambal, the Banas, the Berach, the Khari, the Kothari and the Jakham traversed the State. Except the Chambal, which flowed a few miles in the south-eastern tip of the State, the other rivers were all non perennial. Apart from hundreds of tanks, the rulers built dams such as Udaisagar (1562), Rajasmand (1676) and Jaisamand (1691)<sup>3</sup>. They built beautiful palaces and hunting lodges on and around the dams and made them their pleasure resorts.

It is interesting to note that upto the end of the seventeenth century the people had hardly any knowledge of harnessing the waters of the rivers, dams, tanks, stepwells and wells for irrigating their lands<sup>4</sup>. They, of course, undertook cultivation in the beds of the rivers, lakes and tanks.

The eighteenth century heralded a new era in the field of agriculture in the State. The tanks at Badi, Ghasa, Kapasin and Mandai

1. In this part of the Aravalli-range there are only three narrow passages viz. Jheelwara, Hathigudha and Bhanpura.

2. Alas ! the forests have since been destroyed. The Aravalli hills are now bare and necked.

3. The Jaisamand was supposed to be the largest man-made lake in the world when it was constructed.

4. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod I, p. 118.

were used for irrigation. The wells were dug all over the State and specially on the banks of the rivers for irrigation by means of charas, renths and doris. The water table of the wells dug on the banks of the rivers was 25'. In 'Akbara' it was 50' or even more. The expenditure on digging a well of the first category was from Rs.200 to Rs 300 while for the latter category, it was from Rs 400 to Rs 1000 Even at this stage the water from Rajasmand and Jaisamand lakes was not harnessed for irrigation.

The farmers grew two crops, namely, Rabi and Kharif. The fate of the crops, however, depended solely on the rains. The result was that whenever there was failure of rains, there was misery and hunger all around. The things improved to some extent when sub- soil water was harnessed for irrigation in the early parts of the eighteenth century. The main crops produced were maize, barley, wheat, cotton, oilseeds and opium. Pulses such as gram, moong and urad were also grown.

Though agriculture was the mainstay of the people, animal husbandry had no mean a role to play in the economy of the State. The bullocks were the back bone of farming operations. They were also used for conveying goods. Cows and buffaloes provided milk, butter and matha. Besides, the cattle produced dung which was used as manure in the fields.

Mewar had its share of droughts and famines, though their visits were not as frequent as in north-western parts of Rajasthan. No systematic accounts of the famines are available in the history books of Mewar, obviously because the rulers seldom came to the rescue of the people affected by famine. Of course they did small mercies some time by distributing alms in the capital. The shresthis and other philanthropic people opened centres for distribution of food to the poor in various towns. All this, however, was a drop in the ocean.

The earliest recorded famine during the medieval period took place in 1661-63 according to the Raj-prashasthi, the stone inscription of Nochowki. It helped Maharana Rajsingh to raise a work force of nearly 60,000 for the earth work at the site of the Rajasmand lake which he constructed as a penance for the sins committed by him in murdering his own wife, a Purohit and a Charan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Shyamaldas. Ibid, p.445-46

The famine of 1812-13 took place at a time when Mewar was already in the throes of serious economic crisis. The Marahatas and the Pindaris had ravaged the State. The leading samants were fighting amongst themselves. The conditions came to such a pass that the Maharana had to sell his own jewellery and that of the zanana to maintain his staff<sup>1</sup>. Though no account of the deaths of the people is available, it is certain that the famine must have taken a heavy toll. In the words of Shyamaldas the impact of the famine was so severe that the State was completely devastated and the suffering of its people was unimaginable<sup>2</sup>.

Nature had blessed Mewar with rich mineral resources. The existence of a fully thriving non-ferrous industry in early times is evident from the large tonnage of slag heaps lying scattered along the village Zawar-mata about 25 miles south east of Udaipur. The village has got several zinc retort furnace-sites in ruins. The smelting activity for zinc and lead was in full swing during the reign of Rana Lakha (1382-1397) yielding a net revenue of Rs. 3.00 lakhs per annum. Several temples and houses, which are now in ruined conditions, indicate that the area must have once enjoyed great prosperity. The mines, which had been intermittently worked, were finally abandoned in the great famine of 1812-13<sup>3</sup>. There were zinc mines at Dariba and Potlan in Bhilwara district too. But no account of their working in the past is available.

Iron ore mining in Mewar dates back to the Ahar civilisation. The ore was supplied to the smiths and the gadolia luhars who smelted it with the help of fuel wood and the furnaces operated with hand bellows. They manufactured agricultural implements and primitive arms like swords, guns and armours etc. There were a number of iron-ore mines in the parganas of Mandalgarh, Jahajpur, Gangrar and Badi-sadari etc. The mines went out of use by the end of the 19th century as they became uneconomical in the face of large scale production of pig iron in Bihar and Bengal.

The mines of sand stone, lime stone, quartz, granite and marble were found in various parts of the State. The use of stone and lime in building houses in the towns was common. In rural areas, the houses were generally made of mud but some time stone was also used.

1. Shyamaldas, *Ibid.* p 1740

2. Shyamaldas, *Ibid.* p.108, 305

3. J.S. Gehlot, *Rajputane Ka Itihas I*, p.137. An attempt was made to restart the mines in 1873 but failed. After formation of Rajasthan, the mines were taken over by the Hindustan Zinc Ltd., a Central Government undertaking.



The marble was used in the construction of temples, palaces and important public buildings such as Jaistambh. It was also used for making idols and icons of gods and goddesses, It is, perhaps, for this reason that even rich people did not use marble in constructing their houses during those times.

The marble extensively used on the Nochowki and the temple of Dayalshah at Rajnagar came from the local mines. No indications are, however, available if these mines were worked on large scale during the medieval period as was the case with the Makarana mines in Marwar. In recent years Rajnagar marble has become popular through out the country. Its use on a large scale can be seen in the houses built in Kerala with the money brought from the Gulf countries. The famous Rishasheo temple at Dhuleo, the temples at Zawar and the Jaisamand dam were constructed with "neesh" type of stone (wrongly called marble) found in the Tidi and Baroda mines<sup>1</sup>.

The garnet, a semi-precious stone, was found in various parts of Mewar and specially in Bhilwara district<sup>2</sup>. There is no reference in the history books about the availability of precious stones in any part of Mewar. The emerald mines in the State were discovered in the late thirties this century. The mica mines too were found in early forties.

The ancient cultural and trading centres namely Chittor, Delwara and Zawar continued to flourish during the medieval period. A number of Shresthis, mostly Jains, set up their business at these places. They constructed beautiful temples and organised pilgrimages to various sacred places in India. The rulers gave them due encouragement by granting tax concessions and conferred titles such as Jagat Seth, Nagar Seth etc.

The new centres of trade developed during the mediavel period were Udaipur, Nathdwara and Bhilwara. Maharana Udaisingh had founded the city of Udaipur in 1559 on the Pichhola lake which was built by a Banzara during the reign of Rana Lakha<sup>3</sup>. The city, however, developed only after Maharana Amarsingh reached a settlement with the Mughal emperor Jahangir in 1615 A.D. Since then it continued to flourish not only as capital of the State but as a centre of trade catering to the needs of the entire Bhomat area. It also attracted tourists as a place of scenic beauty.

1. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod I, p.105.

2. Shyamaldas, Ibid. p.105.

3. Shyamaldas, Ibid. p.105.

The town of Nathdwara, where the icon of Shrinathji was installed in 1669, became the main centre of the Vallabhacharya sect of Vaishnavas. Thousands of devotees from various parts of the country visited the town every year and added to its prosperity. The town became famous for its "Pichhawai" painting and exquisite silver jewellery.

Bhilwara became the single largest grain mandi in the State. The agricultural produce from the fertile areas of Begun, Bijolia, Kherad, Hurda and Mandal came here for sale. It was in fact the grain mandi at Bhilwara which determined the rates of food grains and other agricultural produce for whole of the State.

The opium was the main commodity exported from Mewar. Its markets were Marwar and Gujrat. It was also exported to China and middle east through Pali which was situated on the ancient international routes to these countries. The State imported fine cloth from Surat.

Mewar like other States ensured that as far as possible grains should not be exported outside the State. The local merchants purchased the surplus stock and stored in the Khais (wells) specially built for the purpose. Layers of neem leaves were provided in the Khais to save food grains from pests and insects. The Khais were normally opened in times of droughts and famines and thus helped in saving the lives of thousands of people.

If the fort of Kumbhalgarh, the monuments like Jaistambh and Kirtistambh, the world renowned temple complex at Ranakpur, the Rajsamand and the Jaisamand dams, the lake city of Udaipur, the various palaces at Udaipur and Chittor and hundreds of Jain and Vaishnava temples and the tanks built in various parts of the State during the medieval period are any index of the economy of the State, Mewar should have been a prosperous State by any standard. It is, however, doubtful if the prosperity reached the village community which constituted nearly 90% of the State's population. It was this community which bore the real burnt of the numerous wars fought by the Maharanas against the imperial invaders, the Sultans of Mandu and Gujrat and the neighbouring Rajput rulers. The crops were looted and destroyed by the enemy. Some times the Maharanas also ensured destruction of the crops during war times as part of their scorched earth policy. The Marathas and the Pindaris did the rest. Obviously the prosperity was enjoyed by a small section of the people which included jagirdars, businessmen and mutsaddies. The rest of the population languished in poverty.

The main source of revenue of the State Government was land. For historical reasons two thirds of the land in the State was held by Jagirdars, Mufidars and Bhomias. The last two categories of land holders paid virtually no tax at all. The Jagirdars paid annual Rekh and Talwar-bandhi at the time of succession. Later on they were also required to pay "Chhatoond", a cess equivalent to one sixth of the land revenue collected by them. Even then the total contribution made by the Jagirdars to the State exchequer annually hardly exceeded Rs. 1.5 lakh<sup>1</sup>. The land revenue recovered from the tenants by the Jagirdars was at the rate of one half of the produce and some times even more. Besides, the people living in jagirs had to pay the Jagirdars lag bags ranging from 50 to 100.

In the Khalsa area, which was directly under the State, the situation was slightly better. Here the tenants had to pay land revenue from one third to one half of the produce<sup>2</sup>. Ofcourse, they had also to pay a few lag-bags to certain functionaries of the State such as Patwari, Sahana and Gam-balai (lowest village functionary). The total land revenue to the State from the Khalsa area seldom exceeded Rs 10.00 lakhs<sup>3</sup>.

Another source of revenue was "dan" or "sayar" (customs). Being a "Soverign" state, Mewar had levied duties of exports and imports on various commodities and cattle centuries back. Even after Mewar accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals in 1615, the imperial power did not interfere in the exercise of this right as would be apparent from the parwana issued by Maharana, Amarsingh II in 1698 directing the nakedars to allow a certain "Saudagar" Elyarkhan to pass through the State along with his herd of camels and horses. It is not precisely clear when this tax was imposed. The stone inscription on the walls of the Rampole gate of the fort of Chittor, however, indicates that the tax was in vogue in 1536 AD<sup>4</sup>. The collection of revenue on this account was effected by awarding contracts. It was only in 1851 that the State started recovering customs duty directly and the income from this source rose to Rs 4.00 lakhs<sup>5</sup>.

1. In 1865-66 the income from "Chhatoond" was barely Rs 1.65 lakh out of the total revenue of Rs 26.61 lakhs according to Veer Vinod II. p. 2074
2. Shyamaldas Veer Vinod I, p. 137 and 177.
3. The total revenue of the State including tax from Sayar was about Rs. 11.00 lakhs even in 1830. when the political conditions in the State were stable and peaceful. (See Veer Vinod pt. II, p. 1791-92)
4. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod Pt II, p. 2202
5. Shyamaldas, Ibid. p. 2202, 2203.

It appears that some times the Jagirdars also collected customs duty, whenever the Maharanas became weak. It was, however, well recognised that right to levy customs duty belonged exclusively to the ruler of the State, as the Jagirdars themselves admitted in the "Kolnama" signed with the Maharana in May 1818<sup>1</sup>.

The coins have been considered as a symbol of sovereignty from time immemorial. The states, which came under the suzerainty of the central powers, could issue coins only with the permission of the suzerain. Mewar was more less a sovereign state till Maharana Amarsingh accepted the Mughal suzerainty in 1615 AD.

It has been claimed that the silver coins found at Agra bearing the inscription "Shri Guhil" or "Guhil Shri" were introduced by Guhaditya, the founder of the Guhil dynasty of Mewar<sup>2</sup>. Even if this be true, the use of these coins must have been very limited as no such coins have so far been found in any part of Mewar.

Some coins, discovered by Princep, bear the name of "Hamir" on one side and those of Alla-u-ddin, Nassiruddin, Gayasuddin etc. on the other. It has been claimed that these coins were issued by Rana Hamir who had ruled over Mewar in fifteenth century<sup>3</sup>. The assumption is too plausible to be acceptable. Hamir was neither an ally nor a vassal of any Muslim ruler. Mewar had suffered a lot at the hands of Sultan Alla-u-ddin Khilji who captured and ravaged Chittor. It was Hamir who recaptured it from the Tugluks, the successors of the Khiljis. It was therefore, impossible that Rana Hamir would have permitted the use of the name of any Muslim ruler on the coin issued by him.

Some copper coins bearing the name of "Kumbhakaran" on one side and that of "Ekling" on the other have been found. This Kumbhkarana was certainly the great Maharana Kumbha and Ekling the family diety of the house of Shishodias. Copper coins of Rana Sanga have also been found. No coins of the period of Udaisingh, Pratap and Amarsingh have, however, been found. The mints during their periods, perhaps, remained closed owing to continuous warfare with the Mughals.

Maharana Karansingh issued silver coins known as 'Chittori' with the approval of the emperor Jahangir. In 1713 Maharana Sangrarsingh II introduced a new coin "Udaipuri". Apart from the rupee, other coins minted in copper were Bhiladi, Udaipuriya, Nathdwaria etc. which were in circulation in local areas.

1. J.S. Gehlot, *Rajputana Ka Itihas*, p. 311.

2. Shyamaldas Veer Vinod I. p. 210.

3. Shyamaldas Ibid, p. 210.

Prior to the Mughals, the circulation of coins in Mewar was limited. The trade, particularly in the rural areas, was conducted on barter system in which agriculture produce was the measure of value. Things changed during the Mughal rule when coins started taking place of barter gradually.

## **(2) Other Shishodia States**

The area adjoining the southern border of Mewar was known as Vagad. The area was occupied by an aboriginal tribe, the Bhils, since time immemorial. Its early history is obscure. However, according to the Panaheda inscription of 1059 AD the Parmars of Malwa had ruled over it for long<sup>1</sup>. There are conflicting views among the historians as to how and when the area was occupied by the Guhils. The version of J.S. Gehlot, a well known historian, appears to be fairly reliable. According to him, it was some time in 1177 that Rawal Samantsingh, who lost Mewar to the Chouhan ruler Ketu of Jalor, established his rule in Vagad after defeating Raja Chaurasimal, a feudatory of Parmars.

Sihad Deo, grandson of Samantsingh, assumed the title of Maharawal and Maharajadhiraj. This indicated that he was an independent ruler. His capital was at Vadpadrak (Badoda). It was Maharawal Dungarsingh who founded the town of Dungarpur and made it his capital in 1358 AD.

According to 'Turk-e-Babri', Maharawal Udaisingh was a feudatory of Mewar. He had fought on the side of Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanawa in 1527 against Babur and was killed on the battle field. After his death his sons, Prithviraj and Jagmal, divided Vagad between them. The area west of the river Mahi with Dungarpur went to Prithviraj and the area east of the river to Jagmal. The latter made Banswara as capital of the newly carved State.

### **Dungarpur**

Maharawal Ashkaran of Dungarpur accepted the Mughal umbrella in 1577. Since then the rulers of Dungarpur made several attempts to get rid of the strangle-hold of Mewar but without success. By the end of the 18th century the authority of the Mughals was considerably weakened. This led to the rise of Marahatas who plundered and devastated Dungarpur alongwith other neighbouring States. It was not

1 J.S. Gehlot - Rajputane-ka-Itihas. Part-I. p.398

until the treaty with the East India Company was signed in 1818 that peace dawned on Dungarpur. Simultaneously the State also became free from any obligation to Mewar.

### **Banswara**

Vagad's division in 1527 had led to the establishment of the third Guhil State in Rajasthan viz. Banswara as stated earlier. In 1577 Maharawal Pratapsingh accepted the Mughal suzerainty. In 1583 the Bhils of Khandu rose in revolt against Maharawal Mansingh. The revolt was crushed but Mansingh himself was killed at the hands of a Bhil leader. Like Dungarpur, Banswara too faced the problem of dual control of the Mughals and Mewar. Banswara continued to assert its independence from Mewar. The latter, however, did not relax its hold. The State's treaty in 1818 with the East India Company made it possible for it to throw away the yoke of Mewar.

Vagad was one of the most backward regions of the country. The majority of the population was that of the Bhils. They lived on agriculture and forest produce. The only trade was in timber and gum. There were no roads in the region till the end of the nineteenth century. There were no civil or criminal laws and no land revenue system. The magisterial powers were exercised by petty police officials who could sentence an individual to a month's imprisonment. The major part of the region was held by the Jagirdars whose words were law. Apart from the Rajputs, the Bhils also held jagirs.

There were no schools and no dispensaries. The people had to pay half of their produce as land revenue to the State or the Jagirdar concerned. They had also to render 'Begar' (services without payment) to the authorities. The Bhil population was extremely poor. They often lived on 'Mahuwa'—a forest flower from which country liquor is produced. They met their petty expenses from sale of forest wood.

### **Deolia**

The fourth Guhil principality was that of Deolia (Pratapgarh). Rawat Beeka, a scion of the Guhil dynasty of Mewar, founded it in 1561 AD. He occupied about 100 villages belonging to Meenas (also known as Mers). He added another 600 villages to his principality after defeating Chouhan, Rathod and Dodiya Rajputs. He founded the town of Deolia after the name of a Meena woman Dewoo who had committed sati on the death of her husband in the battle against the Rawat. Beeka always

remained loyal to Mewar and rendered military help to Rana Pratap in the battle of Haldighati. His successors Tejsingh, Bhanusingh and Singha followed in his foot prints.

Jaswantsingh was the first ruler of Deolia who declared himself independent of Mewar in 1633 at the instance of the Mughal emperor Shahjahan. At the invitation of Maharana Jagatsingh he went to Udaipur along with his 1000 supporters. All of them were treacherously killed by the Maharana. The Mewar forces occupied Deolia. Harisingh succeeded Jaswantsingh. He approached the Mughal emperor for help against the Maharana. The emperor sent an army in aid of the Rawat. Harisingh had, however, to submit to the Maharana when the war of succession among the sons of Shahjahan took place.

During the last leg of the Mughal empire, the Marahatas became active in Rajasthan States. Rawat Gopalsingh, who succeeded the throne of Deolia in 1722, tried to maintain good relations with the Marahatas. His successor Salamsingh had, however, to face as many as three raids of the Marahatas. Things went from bad to worse during the reign of Sanwatsingh. He had to give an undertaking to pay an annual 'Khiraj' of Rs 72,700 to the Peshawa. The Marahata menace ended when Sanwatsingh entered into a subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in October, 1818.

### **Shahpura**

Shahpura was yet another Guhil principality which was founded by Sujansingh, a grand son of Maharana Amarsingh I, in 1631. It was, however, too small as a State and remained under the suzerainty of the Mughals as well as Mewar. When the East India Company entered Rajasthan in early 19th century, Shahpura became a protectorate of the British, though it also paid khiraj to Mewar.

## **(3) JODHPUR (MARWAR)**

### **The Rathor dynasty**

The founder of the Rastrakoota or the Rathor dynasty of Marwar was Rao Siha, son of Setram. The latter was the grandson of Raja Jaichand Rathor of Kannauj who lost his kingdom to Shahabuddin Ghorī in 1193. How and when Siha came to Marwar is still shrouded in mystery. It is, however, confirmed from an old inscription that he died in Bethoo,

a village 25 kms. away from Pali, on October 9, 1273<sup>1</sup>. He was said to have been killed by a Muslim chief who had captured Pali and massacred the prosperous Brahmin community of this ancient centre of international trade. His son Asthan continued to stay in Pali region. He occupied Khed after defeating the Guhils. He captured Idar from the Bhils. Asthan was succeeded by his son Dhooahad who defeated the Panwars and occupied 560 villages in Badhmer. He was killed at Tirsingadi by Chauhans in 1309 A.D.<sup>2</sup> It is said that he brought the icon of Chakreswari Devi, the family goddess of the Rastrakootas, from Karnataka and installed it at Nagana. The goddess was later on called as Nagnecha Devi after the name of the village<sup>3</sup>.

Not much is known about the pursuits of Dhooahad's successors Raipal, Kanapal, Jalasi, Chada, Tida, Kanhad Deo and Tribhawansi. Tida's grandson, Mallinath or Mala, got rid of Tribhuwansi and occupied Mahewa. The area was later on known as Malani after Mala. It was Mala's younger brother Viram Deo from whom the Rathor branch of Jodhpur started<sup>4</sup>.

Viram Deo was killed by Johiyas in 1383 AD. His son Chunda occupied Mandowar (Mandor). Chunda died in 1408 AD. He had 14 sons and one daughter, Hansabai, who was married to Maharana Lakha of Mewar. Chunda's eldest son was Ranmal. In accordance with the wishes of his late father, Ranmal installed his younger brother Kanha on the Mandowar throne and himself left for Mewar and joined the court of his brother-in-law Maharana Lakha at Chittor. Kanha died within a year of his accession to the throne. He was succeeded by his brother Satta. Ranmal asserted his own claim on the throne in the changed circumstances. He defeated Satta and occupied Mandowar with the help of his nephew, Maharana Mokal of Mewar in 1430 AD.

Mokal was killed by his uncles Chacha and Mera in 1433 AD. When Ranmal heard about it, he rushed to Chittor and installed Mokal's son Kumbha on the throne. He also killed Chacha and Mera. Since Kumbha was still a minor, Ranmal became the defacto ruler of the State with the support of his sister Hansabai. The Rathors now ruled supreme in every department of the State to the chagrin of the local samants. Ranmal got Raghav Deo, Mokal's brother, killed to clear the way for his absolute rule in Mewar. The cup was now full to the brim.

1. Indian Antiquary Vol. 40, p.301

2. G.H. Ojha, Jodhpur Rajya Ka Itihas. Pt. I p.167

3. G.H Ojha, Ibid Pt. I. p.167

4. G.H. Ojha, Ibid Pt. p.193.



The young Kumbha and the local samants decided to get rid of Rannal and his Rathore followers. As a first step they recalled Chunda, the eldest son of Lakha, who had joined the court of Sulan of Mandu. Soon thereafter Rannal was murdered while he was asleep. His followers fled towards Mandowar. Chunda followed and killed most of them in the way. Rannal's son Jodha, however, escaped and took shelter in a village Kawani in Janglu. The Mewar forces occupied Mandowar. It was in 1543 AD that Jodha was able to secure it back through the good offices of his aunt Hansabai, the grand mother of Rana Kumbha<sup>1</sup>. Jodha married his daughter Shringardevi to Kumbha's son Raimal to strengthen the relations with Mewar<sup>2</sup>. Jodha also occupied Sojat after some time.

### **Jodhpur founded**

In 1459 Jodha laid the foundation stone of a fort on the Chidiatoonk hill. There was a notion amongst the Rajputs that the fort would become invincible, if a human being was buried alive in its foundation. One Rajiya Bhambi offered himself for the 'cause'. Poor man was buried at the altar of a superstition<sup>3</sup>.

Jodha led an expedition against his own son-in-law Mohil Ajeetsingh and captured Chhapar Dron. His relations with his eldest son Bika were strained. Bika left Jodhpur and carved out for himself the new principality of Bikaner in Janglu desh. Jodha died in April 1489. He was succeeded by his younger son Satal whose reign lasted only 3 years. Satal was killed in the battle of Kosana in 1492 AD. Being issueless Satal was succeeded by his brother Suja. Bika, now the ruler of Bikaner, demanded from Suja certain heir-looms of the Rathor family which his father, Jodha, had promised to give him by virtue of his being the eldest son. As Suja failed to respond, Bika laid a siege to Jodhpur and lifted it only when the heir-looms were handed over to him. Suja died in 1515 AD.

Suja's eldest son Bagha had died during his life time. Bagha had two sons Veeram and Ganga. The Samants led by the Thakur of Bagadi put the younger son Ganga on the throne. Veeram was given the jagir of Sojat. Veeram felt that he had been unduly deprived of his right to the throne. He started looting the parganas of Jodhpur. This eventually led to confrontation between the two brothers. Ganga captured Sojat. He

1. G.H. Ojha, *Ibid*, Pt.I p. 229

2. G.H. Ojha, *Ibid*, Pt.I. p. 240-41

3. G.H. Ojha, *Ibid*, Pt.I. p. 241

sent his samants Raimal and Ratansingh to join the forces of Rana Sanga. Both were killed in the battle against Babur at Khanwa in 1527. Ganga was a weak ruler. Most of his feudatories became independent. His writ ran only in Jodhpur and Sojart parganas. He was killed in 1532 by his own son Maldeo.

### **Maldeo's wars**

Maldeo started his reign with a bang. He captured Bhadrajun, Merta, Ajmer and Nagaur within a few years. Maldeo tasted his first defeat at the hands of Maharana Udaisingh of Mewar. Maldeo had married the daughter of Jhala Jaitsingh of Khairwa. Jaitsingh's younger daughter was very beautiful. Maldeo expressed his desire to marry her too. Jaitsingh took his daughter quietly to Kumbhalgarh and married to Maharana Udaisingh. When Maldeo heard the news, he sent his army against the Maharana. In the battle, which took place at Kumbhalgarh, Maldeo's forces were defeated.

In Feb. 1542 Maldeo sent an expedition against Rao Jaitsingh of Bikaner. Jaitsingh was killed in the battle of Saheba. Maldeo occupied more than half of the territory of Bikaner. He conferred the jagir of Deedwana, Fatehpur and Jhunjhunu on his commander Koopa.

In January 1542 Shershah Suri had defeated Humayun and declared himself as emperor of Delhi. At this point of time Maldeo was a power to be reckoned with. Humayun camped near Bikaner and sent a message to Maldeo for help. Simultaneously Shershah got into touch with Maldeo and promised big favours in case he could get hold of Humayun and hand him over to him. Maldeo decided to go with the winning horse. Humayun got scent of Maldeo's plan to trap him and immediately left for Amarkot.

In 1544 Rao Kalyanmal of Bikaner and Veeram, Chief of Merta, who had been deprived of their territories by Maldeo, approached Shershah for help. In spite of the fact that Maldeo had sided with Shershah in his pursuit of Humayun, the latter was conscious of the growing strength of Maldeo. He marched towards Marwar at the head of a big army. Maldeo was prepared to meet any contingency. The two armies faced each other at Girri for about a month without a single shot having been fired by either side. Obviously the two sides were assessing the strength of each other. In the meanwhile the cunning Shershah succeeded in creating suspicion in the minds of Maldeo about the loyalty

of his own chiefs. Maldeo ordered withdrawal of his forces from the battle field in spite of the chiefs assuring him of their complete loyalty. The result was that Shershab captured Jodhpur and Ajmer. He handed over Bikaner to Kalyanmal and Merta to Vecram. Maldeo's humiliation was complete. He escaped to the Siwana fort. Fortunately for Maldeo, Shershab died in an accident during his Kalinger expedition in May 1545. Maldeo recaptured Jodhpur the same year.

Maldeo now resumed his aggressive wars against his neighbours. He captured Pokaran and Phalodi in 1550. His attempt to annex Badhmer and Kotda, however, failed. He despatched his army to Jaisalmer to humble Rawal Loonkaran. The army returned after recovering some money from him. Maldeo manipulated the occupation of Jalor fort but had to surrender it back to his owner, Pathan Malik Khan, after about two years.

In 1554 Maldeo led an expedition against Rao Jaimal of Merta. On a request made by Jaimal, Rao Kalyanmal of Bikaner despatched his army for the defence of Merta. Maldeo's forces were defeated. He himself left the battle field and returned to Jodhpur. Maldeo avenged his defeat in 1557 and captured Merta. He, however, lost the fort in 1562 to Akbar who had succeeded Humayun as Mughal emperor in 1556 AD. Earlier Akbar had also captured Jaitaran.

Maldeo died in November 1562 at Jodhpur. He was succeeded by his younger son Chandrasen whom he had designated as his heir apparent after exiling his eldest son Ram in 1547. Ram went away to Udaipur where his father-in-law Maharana Udaisingh granted him the jagir of Kelwa.

Rao Maldeo was undoubtedly one of the greatest rulers of his time. He ascended the throne at a moment when Marwar's writ did not run beyond the parganas of Jodhpur and Sojat. By organising the Rathors into a strong and unified force he was able to turn the small principality of Jodhpur into a big Marwar State. Purely from the point of view of territorial expansion his contribution was by far the greatest amongst all the rulers of Marwar. He carried out large scale repairs of forts and constructed new ones in various parts of his State for the defence of his kingdom.

Maldeo had his shortcomings and failure too. To quench his lust for power he killed his aged father Rao Ganga. He made his younger son

as his successor ignoring the claim of his eldest son and thus sowed the seeds of a civil war. In his war against Shershab at Girri he proved that he could falter at crucial moments. Suspecting his own men he caved in without firing a single shot. If he had gone for an all out war against the Pathan emperor and not vacillated as he did, he would have in all probability defeated Shershab and changed the course of Indian history.

### **Weak successors**

As anticipated Chandrasen's accession to the throne was resented by his brothers and chiefs. His brothers Ram, Raimal and Udaisingh started looting and devastating various parganas of Marwar. Taking advantage of the situation of a near civil war, the Mughal emperor, Akbar, sent an expedition against Jodhpur. Ram joined hands with the Mughal forces. The Jodhpur fort fell to the Mughals in 1563 AD<sup>1</sup>.

In 1570 Akbar came to Nagaur. Chandrasen met Akbar here and accepted his overlordship. He was, however, disappointed when he failed to get Jodhpur back. He went away to Bhadrajun. The Mughals followed him. He had to surrender Bhadrajun and had also to pay a handsome amount to the Mughals<sup>2</sup>. Akbar entrusted Jodhpur to Raisingh of Bikaner in 1572<sup>3</sup>.

Chandrasen lost Siwana to the Mughals in 1573. In 1575 Rawal Harlal Bhati of Jaisalmer laid siege to the fort of Pokaran, the last bastion held by Chandrasen. The Rathor ruler handed over the fort to the Bhatias on receipt of 4 lakhs of fadiyas<sup>4</sup>. Having lost practically the whole of Marwar, Chandrasen spent a number of years as a fugitive in Sirohi, Dungarpur, Banswara and Mewar. In 1579 he returned to Marwar and tried to assert his authority in some parts of the State. The Mughal army foiled his attempt. He took shelter in the Piploda hills where he died in 1581. Chandrasen had three sons, namely, Raisingh, Ugrasen and Ash Karan. The last two had killed each other. Raisingh, who had joined the Mughal army, was killed in the battle at Datani (Sirohi) in 1582. Udaisingh, an elder brother of Chandrasen, had served the Mughal army in many a battle. In 1583 Akbar conferred on him the title of Raja and

1. G.H.Ojha. Ibid Pt. I, p.333-34

2. G.H.Ojha. Ibid Pt. I, p.338

3. G.H.Ojha. Ibid Pt. I, p.339

4. G.H.Ojha. Ibid Pt. I, p.346-48

and made him the ruler of Jodhpur. Udaisingh was known as 'Mota Raja' probably because he was too fat.

Udaisingh forfeited the jagirs of Charans and Brahmins granted to them by his forefathers. The result was that several Charans and Brahmins committed suicide. In 1587 Udaisingh married his daughter to Salim, the eldest son of Akbar. He participated in the war launched by Akbar against Rao Surtan of Sirohi. He occupied Siwana in 1589 after defeating his nephew Kalyandas. He died in Lahore in 1595 where he had gone to attend the Mughal court.

Akbar nominated Soorsingh, one of the younger sons of Udaisingh, as the ruler of Jodhpur. Soorsingh served the Mughal army and fought several battles in the south. Akbar gave him the parganas of Jaitaran and Merta in 1605 AD. The same year Akbar died. His son Salim succeeded him in the name of Jahangir. Soorsingh served the Mughals through out his life. Jahangir gave him the pargana of Phalodi for his services to the empire. He granted his son Gajsingh the patta of Jalor for defeating the Pathans. Soorsingh constructed the Soorsagar lake in 1613. He died in 1619 at Mahakar in the south where he was sent by the emperor to quell the local disturbances.

Gajsingh succeeded the Marwar throne while he was in Burhanpur. The emperor issued a firman renewing the grant of 'jagir' of the parganas of Jodhpur, Jaitaran, Sojat, Siwana, Tekhada, Satalmer, Pokaran and Merwara in his favour. Gajsingh, however, could not occupy Satalmer and Pokaran, as they were still in the possession of the Bhatias of Jaisalmer. Gajsingh served the Mughals faithfully like his father. Jahangir awarded him the title of 'Dal-Thambhan' for his victories over the southern chiefs in 1622. Next year he was deputed with prince Parvej to suppress prince Khuram who had raised a standard of revolt against his father Jahangir. In the battle, which took place between the opposing forces, Khuram was defeated. The emperor granted the parganas of Phalodi and Merta to Gajsingh on this occasion.

Jahangir died in 1627 on his way from Kashmir to Lahore. Khuram succeeded him in the name of Shahjahan. The new emperor utilised the services of Gajsingh in his various military expeditions. One of the note-worthy successes of Gajsingh was against Khane-Jahan.

Gajsingh nominated his younger son Jaswantsingh as his heir apparent under the influence of his concubine Anar Begum. He

succeeded in obtaining the approval of Shahjahan also in this regard. He ignored the claim of his eldest son, the legendary hero Amarsingh Rathod. He died at Agra in 1638 AD.

### **Jaswantsingh's rise**

On hearing of his father's death, Jaswantsingh, who had gone to Bundi for his marriage with a Hada princess, returned to Agra. The emperor renewed the grant of the parganas of Jodhpur, Sojat, Phalodi, Merta and Siwana in his favour. A year later he also granted him the pargana of Phalodi. Jaswantsingh came to Jodhpur in April 1640 and formally ascended the throne. In 1650 he secured the firman of Pokaran from the emperor and occupied it after defeating the Bhatias of Jaisalmer. In December, 1653 the Emperor conferred on him the title of Maharaja and raised his mansab to 6000. He attained this distinction at the age of 27 years and that too without a record of any distinguished services to the empire so far. No wonder, Mirza Raja Jaisingh of Amber became envious of him. Jaswantsingh married his niece Anup Kanwar to Suleman Shikoh, the eldest son of Dara, at the persistent request of Dara himself<sup>1</sup>. The very next year i.e. in 1655 he was conferred with the pargana of Jalor.

In Sept. 1657 Shahjahan fell seriously ill. He had four sons namely Dara, Suja, Aurangzeb and Murad. Each one of them was aspirant of the Mughal throne. A war of succession began even before Shahjahan's death. Prince Dara was with Shahjahan at this crucial moment. Of the other three princes, Suja was in Bengal, Aurangzeb in south and Murad in Gujarat. All the three princes now started for Delhi with an eye on the Mughal throne. Dara dispatched an army under his son Suleman Shikoh and Mirza Raja Jaisingh against Suja. Dara's forces defeated Suja at Bahadarpur near Banaras. Suja had to retreat to Bengal.

In the south Aurangzeb joined hands with Murad. Dara dispatched an army under Jaswantsingh to halt the march of Aurangzeb and Murad. Jaswantsingh camped at Dharmat, 25 kms. away from Ujjain. By April 15, 1658 Aurangzeb and Murad also reached Dharmat. In the battle which took place there on April 16, Dara's forces were decisively defeated. Jaswantsingh himself left the battle field and reached Jodhpur, where he was said to have faced the wrath of his Hada Rani Karmetibai for his "disgracefully" leaving the battle field<sup>2</sup>.

1. Dr. N.C. Rai, *Maharaja Jaswantsingh Ka Jeewan and Samaya*, p.49.

2. G.H. Ojha, *Jodhpur Rajya Ka Itihas*, page 435. The story appears to have been given credence by Barniyar and Mannuki.

Having won the first round Aurangzeb advanced towards Agra. Dara met him at Samogarh at the head of a big army. In the battle which took place on May 29, 1665, Aurangzeb came out victorious. Dara took shelter in Delhi. Aurangzeb reached Agra and interned his father Shahjahan in the fort. He went to Mathura and arrested his brother Murad who had sided with him in the battle of Dharmat on the assurance that he would be made the next emperor. Murad was dispatched to Gwalior and interned in the fort. Aurangzeb next went to Delhi to get hold of Dara who fled towards Punjab. Aurangzeb formally ascended the coveted Mughal throne on July 21, 1658.

Aurangzeb now started consolidating his position. He tried to win over the leading chiefs of the Mughal empire to his side. He invited Jaswantsingh to his court. The latter submitted himself to the new emperor at Rupar on August 14. Aurangzeb accepted his apology for siding with Dara. In the meanwhile Suja reorganised his army and set out again for Delhi in September 1658. Aurangzeb too made necessary preparation to meet the threat. Suja reached Banaras and captured Allahabad. Advancing further, he camped at Khajuwa on December 30. Aurangzeb marched towards Suja and reached Koda along with an army of 90,000 on January 2, 1659. He was just 12 kms away from Suja. On January 4, there was an exchange of fire between the opposing forces. It was, however, some sort of a probing mission. The commanders on both side decided to cross swords the next day. In the early hours on January 5, Jaswantsingh, who was commanding 14000 strong Rajput army on the side of Aurangzeb, returned to Jodhpur after looting the camp of prince Sultan Muhamad.

As bad luck would have it, Aurangzeb defeated Suja at Khajuwa. He now sent an army to Jodhpur to punish Jaswantsingh. The latter left Jodhpur and went away in the hilly fort of Siwana. Meanwhile Dara captured Ahmedabad. At this point of time Jaswantsingh sent a message to Dara inviting him to reach Merta so that they could jointly attack Agra and free Shahjahan. Dara reached Merta. Jaswantsingh was no where to be seen. Dara sent a messenger to Jaswantsingh to know about his intentions. The latter conveyed that he was reorganising the army and that he would join him at Ajmer. Dara left for Ajmer.

The shrewd Aurangzeb was aware of the goings on between Dara and Jaswantsingh. At the instance of Aurangzeb, Mirza Raja Jaisingh of Amber wrote a letter to Jaswantsingh advising him to leave the company of Dara and join hands with Aurangzeb. He assured him that the emperor would not only forgive him but would also appoint him as Subedar of Gujarat and grant other favours. Relying on the assurance of his brother-prince, Jaswantsingh gave up his plan to join Dara.

Dara reached Ajmer as scheduled but only to find that Jaswantsingh had again failed to keep his promise. Dara sent frantic messages to him but all in vain. Meanwhile Aurangzeb's forces reached Ajmer. In the battle, which took place at Deorai in March 1659, Dara was defeated. He made his way towards Gujarat. True to his words, Aurangzeb raised the mansab of Jaswantsingh to 7000 Jat and 7000 Sowar and appointed him as Subedar of Gujarat.

Jaswantsingh reached Sirohi on March 30, 1659 on his way to Ahmedabad. Mirza Raja Jai Singh also reached Sanana, a few kms. away from Sirohi along with the Mughal army to get hold of Dara. Both of them marched towards Ahmedabad. At Sidhpur they heard that Dara had gone to Kachch. After reaching Ahmedabad, Jaswant Singh stayed there for managing the affairs of the Suba, while Jarsingh left for Kachch in search of Dara. The latter proceeded to Iran. In the way he was arrested by some of his "friends" and brought to Delhi where he was put to death.

Jaswantsingh remained Subedar of Gujarat for about three years. In December, 1661 he was asked to proceed to south to assist Shayasth Khan in the Mughal campaign against the Marahata ruler Shivaji. He joined Khan at Poona in April, 1662. By now the Mughal army had already had upper hand. It had captured several towns including Poona from the Marahatas. Shayasth Khan made 'Lal Mahal' at Poona as his residence. Jaswantsingh and his army were detailed near Poona on the road to Singhar where Shivaji was camping. On April 5, 1663 Shivaji marched towards Poona along with one thousand of his trusted soldiers. Hoodwinking the army of Jaswantsingh, Shivaji reached Poona by the evening. By mid- night he along with his followers entered the Lal Mahal quietly. They killed one of Shayasth Khan's sons, his six wives and forty attendants and wounded Shayasth Khan himself, his two other sons and eight women seriously. Shivaji returned to his camp wholly unscathed. Next morning when Jaswantsingh went to Khan to convey his condolences, the latter greeted him with derisive words. Interestingly,



when Aurangzeb heard about the daring raid of Shivaji, he removed Shayasth Khan from the command and appointed his own son Moazam in his place. As for Jaswantsingh, he was not only retained in his post but was also honoured with royal presents<sup>1</sup>.

Jaswantsingh laid seige to the Kondana fort. The success, however, deluded him. In view of the heavy casualties suffered by the Mughal army, the seige had to be abandoned after about six months. On the other hand Shivaji looted the Mughal towns Surat and Ahmednagar. Aurangzeb removed Mauzam as well as Jaswantsingh from south in September, 1664. Both of them returned to Delhi.

In 1666 Mauzam and Jaswantsingh marched towards Iran where king Abbas was making preparations to invade India. They reached Lahore. In meanwhile Abbas died on August 22, 1666. Both of them returned to Delhi.

Aurangzeb sent Mauzam and Jaswantsingh again to south. This time they were able to bring round Shivaji. The latter agreed to pay homage to the emperor and sent his son Shambhuji to the Mughal court as a token of his loyalty to the emperor. Aurangzeb awarded Jaswantsingh the parganas of Thirad and Ratanpur for his services. In 1671 Jaswantsingh was appointed as Subedar of Gujarat for the second time.

The Afghans were creating trouble for some time in Afghanistan. Jaswantsingh was, therefore, shifted from Gujarat to Jamrood as 'Thanedar'. He was to assist Shujat Khan in his campaign against the Afghans. The mission, however, failed in spite of continuous efforts of the Mughal army for more than 5 years. Jaswantsingh himself died at Peshawar<sup>2</sup> on November 28, 1678 at the age of 52 without a male heir. His two sons Prithvi Singh and Jagatsingh had died earlier. His two wives were, however, at a stage of advanced pregnancy.

During his forty years long stewardship of Jodhpur, Jaswant Singh spent most of his time in the service of the Mughals. The administration of his State was carried on by his Pradhans. The notable among them were Rajsingh Kumpawat, Khceja Farsat, Muhnot Nenasi and Pancholi Kesarisingh. Jaswantsingh served two successive Mughal emperors, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb. And surprisingly enough he enjoyed an enviable position in the courts of both.

<sup>1</sup> Dr Nirmal Chand Roy— Ibid, p. 90

<sup>2</sup> Jadunath Sarkar, Ojha and other historians were of the view that Jaswantsingh's death took place at Jamrood. However according to Khyats and Ajeetodaya, Jaswantsingh died in Peshawar.

Though Jaswantsingh displayed hardly any quality of leadership either on the battle field or in any other sphere, Shahjahan treated him generously. He was conferred the title of Maharaja. His 'mansab' was raised to 7000 jat and 7000 sowar—the highest honour conferred on any Rajput ruler during Shahjahan's reign. He was also granted jagirs from time to time. All these favours were done to him for no other reason than his friendship with Dara, the darling son of Shahjahan. And yet Jaswantsingh played foul with Dara more than once in his hour of crisis.

Jaswantsingh did not fail to play traunt with Aurangzeb also. Having sided with Aurangzeb in the battle against Suja at Khajuwa, he left the battlefield along with his Rathor soldiers after looting the camp of prince Sultan Mohamunad even before the battle started. Aurangzeb defeated Suja. The challenge from his other brothers including Dara was also over in due course. Aurangzeb, however, preferred not to punish Jaswantsingh for his perfidity.

Jaswantsingh did not prove a good general either. He did not display brilliance, if he had any, in any of the major military campaigns launched by Aurangzeb. Even as Governor of Gujarat, his record was none too flattering. His loyalty was always suspected. And yet Aurangzeb showered honour after honour on him. He granted him as many as 8 parganas in jagir in and outside Marwar. The treatment given to him by Aurangzeb was in fact more generous than that accorded to him by Shahjahan. The reason for this phenomena was not that the emperor had any liking for him but the grim political situation prevailing in the country at that time. A stern realist as he was, Aurangzeb preferred to keep him on his right side rather than sending him to the enemy's camp.

### **Mughal occupation of Jodhpur**

Following the death of Maharaja Jaswantsingh in November 1678, Aurangzeb confiscated Jodhpur on the pretext that the late Maharaja had no heir. The two pregnant widows of the Maharaja accompanied by the Rathor samants left Janirood on their way to Delhi under instructions of the emperor. The party reached Lahore on February 15, 1679 where each of the two widows gave birth to a male child. The babies were named Ajitsingh and Dalthambhan. On arrival at Delhi, the party was joined by some Rathor chiefs who came from Marwar to pay their homage to the newly born princes and to escort them to Jodhpur.

A deputation of Rathor samants met the emperor to seek his permission to take the ruling family to Jodhpur. Aurangzeb was not surc

about the legitimacy of the newly born sons of Jaswantsingh. He, therefore, turned down the request. A few days later, Dalthambhan died. The Rathor chiefs were now all the more worried about the safety of the only surviving heir to the Jodhpur throne. They again met the emperor and requested him to allow them to leave for Jodhpur. The emperor agreed on the condition that the members of the ruling family including Jaswantsingh would continue to stay at Delhi. This further created suspicion in their minds about the intentions of the emperor. They decided to shift Ajitsingh secretly from Delhi beyond the reach of the emperor.

The Rathors started leaving Delhi in batches. They despatched the child prince with the wife of a Rathor chief under the supervision of Mukunddas. By the end of July, about 100 sowars were left at Delhi along with the widows of Jaswantsingh and a couple of chiefs. Aurangzeb came to know that the family of Jaswantsingh was planning to leave for Marwar surreptitiously. He, therefore, desired that the family be shifted to Kishangarh house. This led to a skirmish between the local authorities and the custodians of the ruling Rathor family in which some sixty people were killed. The rest of the Rathor samants escaped after killing the widows of Jaswantsingh and other women for fear of molestation by the Mughals.

Meanwhile Ajitsingh and party joined by Durgadas Rathor reached Salawas near Jodhpur on July 23, 1679. Here Ajitsingh was formally declared as Maharaja by the Rathor nobility. The Rathors felt that Ajitsingh was not safe in Marwar as it was under the occupation of the Mughals. Durgadas took him to Udaipur where Maharana Rajsingh I conferred the jagir of Kelwa on Ajitsingh. Aurangzeb was already unhappy with Rajsingh. The shelter provided to Ajitsingh only added fuel to the fire. In September, 1679, Aurangzeb attacked Mewar and captured Chittorgarh, Udaipur and several other parganas. Rajsingh died in October, 1680, while the Mughal campaign was still on.

Rajsingh was succeeded by his son Jaisingh. The new Maharana and Durgadas established contacts with prince Akbar who was unhappy with his father Aurangzeb. Akbar rose in revolt against his father and declared himself as emperor in connivance with Maharana Jaisingh and Durgadas. The plan, however, misfired. The details in this regard have been narrated earlier in the sub- chapter relating to Mewar. Jaisingh had

to shift Ajitsingh to Kalindri in Sirohi where he was brought up incognito by a family of Pushkarana Brahmins.

### **Appearance of Ajitsingh**

When Ajitsingh became 8 years old in 1687, the Rathor chiefs became anxious to see him. Ajitsingh made his appearance at Paladi (Sirohi). The chiefs presented him 'nazars' as a token of recognising him as ruler of Marwar. Durgadas too returned to Marwar after bidding good-bye to prince Akbar who went away to Iran. He met the young Maharaja at Bhimarlai on October 21, 1687. His arrival in Marwar infused new blood in Rathors. They brought the Mughal administration in Marwar to a stand-still by guerrilla tactics. They started even recovering 'choath' from the Mughal thanedars. Aurangzeb could not be a mere spectator to this situation. He deputed Sujat Khan, an able general, to deal with the Rathors. Sujat Khan succeeded in his mission to a large extent. Ajitsingh had to take shelter in the Chhapan hills of Mewar, where Maharana Jaisingh took full care of him<sup>1</sup>. In 1693, the Rathors occupied Siwana but lost it a little later.

Durgadas had sent Akbar's son and daughter to Marwar for safety, when Akbar had to flee to south after the failure of his campaign against his father Aurangzeb in 1681. Since the two children were now grown up, Aurangzeb was worried about their future. He sent feelers to Durgadas for handing them over to him. He assured Durgadas that on return of the children he would grant him suitable mansab and jagir. Durgadas restored the girl to his grandfather as a gesture of good will but declined the offer of mansab and jagir till Jodhpur was restored to his master (Ajitsingh). Negotiation continued between them for about two years through the good offices of one Ishwardas. Meanwhile Ajitsingh married the daughter of Maharana Jaisingh's brother Gajsingh. The marriage convinced Aurangzeb that Ajitsingh was the real son of Jaswantsingh. Aurangzeb now partially conceded the demand of Durgadas and granted Ajitsingh the parganas of Jalor, Sanchor and Siwana. Durgadas himself was given mansab and a suitable jagir. He returned the son of Akbar to Aurangzeb. When Durgadas presented himself before Aurangzeb, the latter received him with due regard and appointed him as Fojdar of Patan in 1698 AD. Peace was thus restored between the Mughals and the Rathors.

<sup>1</sup> G.H. Ojha—Jodhpur Rajya Ka Itihas Vol. I. p. 509

The honeymoon was short lived. In 1701 Aurangzeb asked Ajitsingh to report at the Mughal court. As the latter suspected the intentions of the emperor, he avoided going to Delhi. Aurangzeb felt that root cause of the trouble was Durgadas. He asked his son Azam, who was posted as Subedar of Ahmedabad, to get Durgadas murdered. Azam invited Durgadas to Ahmedabad. Durgadas left Patan for Ahmedabad and camped at a village near the Gujarat capital. Here he learnt of the trap laid for his murder. He at once returned to Patan. The Mughal army followed him. He would have surely been caught but for the holding operations by his valiant grand son Anoopsingh who laid down his life but succeeded in saving the life of Durgadas. After collecting his family from Patan, Durgadas left for Marwar and joined Ajitsingh. They both conducted raids on various Mughal thanas and struck terror in various parts of Marwar. In the process the people suffered heavily. Thousands of people migrated to neighbouring areas.

In 1707 Aurangzeb died. Taking advantage of the fluid situation created by the war of succession amongst the late emperor's sons Ajitsingh occupied Jodhpur and Merta. Meanwhile Mauzam acceded to the Mughal throne after defeating his brother Azam at the battle of Jajaw on June 9, 1707. He assumed the name of Bahadurshah. He led an expedition against Jodhpur and captured it. He had already taken possession of Amber because its ruler Jaisingh II too had sided with Azam in the war of succession.

### **The triple alliance**

In March 1708 Bahadurshah had to proceed to south to suppress the revolt staged by his brother Kambux. He took Ajitsingh, Jaisingh and Durgadas with him so that they might not be able to foment trouble in the north during his absence. The two rulers approached Bahadurshah several times during the journey for return of their respective 'watans' to them but without success. They secretly left the emperor's entourage and reached Udaipur on April 30, 1708. Maharana Amarsingh-II received them with extreme cordiality.

The relations between the house of Shishodiyas and the house of Kachhavas reached a high water mark when the Maharana married his daughter Chandra Kanwar to Jaisingh. Ajitsingh had already married the daughter of the Maharana's uncle some twelve years back. He engaged his eight year daughter, Suraj Kanwar, to Jaisingh. The alliance among

the three leading ruling houses of Rajasthan was thus complete. Ajitsingh was reinstalled on the Marwar throne on July 3, 1708 with the help of Mewar army.

From Jodhpur the two princes proceeded to Sambhar and captured it. Ajitsingh followed this victory by his occupation of Deedwana. Meanwhile another contingent of the Rajput army led by Diwan Ram Chandra had captured Amber. In October 1708 the two princes reached Amber where Jaisingh formally ascended the throne. Ajitsingh presented some horses and elephants to Jaisingh on the occasion and returned to Jodhpur via Sambhar<sup>1</sup>. It was not, however until May 1710 that the emperor confirmed Ajitsingh and Jaisingh in their respective 'jagirs'.

### **Acendency of Ajitsingh**

Soon differences started cropping up between Durgadas and the Maharaja. Durgadas had acted as guardian of Ajitsingh since his birth. Not unnaturally, he had become almost a father figure in Marwar. Besides, he held mansab and jagir directly from the emperor. As Ajitsingh entered into twenties, he started asserting himself. Gradually he not only became indifferent to Durgadas but ignored his matured advice on vital matters of state. The situation took a turn for the worse on the conclusion of the battle at Sambhar in October 1708 when Ajitsingh exiled Durgadas from Marwar.

The old warrior went straight to Mewar. Maharana Amarsingh received him with due courtesy. He not only granted him the jagir of Vijaypur but also appointed him as Hakim of Rampura. Durgadas breathed his last on November 22, 1718. He was cremated on the banks of the river Khsipra near Ujjan where a cenotaph built in his memory still stands reminding his countrymen of the fate of a man who faithfully served his master with his sweat and blood. The only consolation is that the former Maharaja Gajsingh, the twelfth successor of Ajitsingh, has carried out extensive repairs of his dilapidated memorial in 1984.

The fate of Champawat Mukunddas of Pali was still worse. Like Durgadas he also held mansab and jagir directly from the emperor. Ajitsingh got him murdered and occupied Pali. He subjugated Indarsingh who held the fief of Nagaur from the Mughals. He humbled Raja Rajsingh and unfurled his flag over Kishangarh<sup>2</sup>.

1. Meera Mitra—Maharaja Ajitsingh-Aevam-Unka-Yug. p.159-160

2. Ojha Ibid page 544, 545 and 550

In February, 1712 Bahadurshah died. One of his sons, Jahandarshah, succeeded him. Within a year his own nephew, Farrukhsiyar, defeated him and became emperor. Taking advantage of the swift changes at Delhi, Ajitsingh occupied the Mughal territory of Ajmer<sup>1</sup>.

Emboldened by the territorial successes Ajitsingh destroyed several mosques and stopped 'ajan' in his State<sup>2</sup>. He dismissed a number of Mughal officials posted in Jodhpur. He got the son and grandson of Indarsingh murdered. Their crime was that they had gone to Delhi to make complaint to the emperor against Ajitsingh's interference in Nagaur. Similar complaint was also made by Rajsingh of Kishangarh. The emperor was now determined to teach a lesson to Ajitsingh. He sent an army against him in December, 1713 which occupied Ajmer and Merta without resistance. The army proceeded towards Jodhpur. Ajitsingh took shelter in Bikaner. Eventually Ajitsingh had to agree to give his daughter Indar Kunwar in 'dola'<sup>3</sup> to the emperor and to send his son Abhaysingh to the Mughal court. He also undertook to visit Delhi whenever summoned by the emperor<sup>4</sup>.

In November, 1714 the emperor granted Ajitsingh the parganas of Jodhpur, Merta and Sojat. In April, 1715 he increased his mansab to 6000. Having secured all that he wanted, Ajitsingh sent his daughter Indarkunwar with Bhandari Khinvasi to Delhi where she was married to the emperor with fan fare<sup>5</sup>. Soon thereafter Ajitsingh was appointed as Subedar of Gujarat. In 1716, the emperor conferred on him the jagir of Nagaur. Ajitsingh occupied it on June 30 after defeating Indarsingh.

During his tenure as subedar of Gujarat Ajitsingh kept the Muslim population of Ahmedabad in good humour. He visited the Idgah and distributed cloths and money to the Mullas and Kazis<sup>6</sup>. Strangely enough he did not fare well on the administrative side. His officers spread terror and extorted money from the public. There was hue and cry from the

1. Ojha Ibid. p. 554

2. Ojha. Ibid. p. 555

3. The custom of offering a girl for marriage at a place other than that of her parents is called 'dola'. This type of marriage took place when the status of the bride's family was inferior to that of the bride-groom.

4. Meera Mitra. Ibid. p. 188

5. Meera Mitra. Ibid. p. 192-193 It was the last marriage between a Rajput princess and a Muslim prince.

6. Meera Mitra. Ibid. p. 197.

people against Ajitsingh. The emperor was obliged to remove him as subedar. Ajitsingh felt deeply humiliated. He returned to Jodhpur in July, 1717.

For sometime things were hotting up at Delhi. The relations between the emperor and the all powerful Saiyad brothers—Abdulla Khan and Hussain Alikhan—became strained. The emperor was determined to curb their powers and destroy them. The tragedy, however, was that most of his supporters had deserted him and joined the Saiyads. He invited his father-in-law Ajitsingh to Delhi to help him in the crisis. It was after several months that Ajitsingh reached Delhi and even then it was with great reluctance that he met the emperor on August 21, 1718. His dismissal as subedar of Gujarat was still very much in his mind. No wonder his sympathies were more with the Saiyads than with his son-in-law.

The emperor tried to appease Ajitsingh in many ways. He increased his mansab and conferred on him the rare title of 'Raj Rajeswar'. He also gave him costly gifts. In December, 1718 he granted him the governorship of Gujarat for the second time. In spite of all these favours done to Ajitsingh, the emperor failed to move him away from Abdulla Khan.

On February 10, 1719 Hussain Ali Khan returned from south along with a big army. His brother Abdulla Khan, Ajitsingh and Maharao Bhimsingh of Kota met him at a place near Delhi. Ajitsingh threw his lot openly with the Saiyad brothers. They were now a formidable combination against Farrukhsiyar. The emperor was anxious to meet them to iron out the differences. They agreed to meet him provided the Diwane-khas and the Top Khana were placed under them and S.Jaisingh, who was considered to be the villain of the peace, was made to return to Amber. The emperor complied with both of their wishes. They met him on February 14 but the talks were inconclusive. On February 17, Abdulla Khan met the emperor alone. He was in no mood for a compromise. Hot words were exchanged between them. By now practically the entire fort and the palace were under the control of the men of Saiyads and Ajitsingh. Farrukhsiyar was arrested. He was replaced by prince Rafiudderjat on Feb. 18, 1719.

Since Ajitsingh had played a significant role in the bloodless coup, the new emperor reinstated him as subedar of Gujarat and abolished 'jaziya'. After about two months, Farrukhsiyar was murdered while still



in prison. The people held Ajitsingh responsible for the gruesome murder and nicknamed him as 'Damad-e-kush' (murderer of son-in-law). Ajitsingh got her widowed daughter Indarkanwar reconverted to Hinduism and sent to Jodhpur. The emperor Rafi-uddarjat granted her a pension of Rs. 10,800 p.m.

In May, 1719 Rafiuddarajat abdicated the throne on ground of health. His elder brother Rafi-uddola succeeded him. On the death of Rafi-uddola in September prince Muhammad Shah ascended the Mughal throne. Muhammad Shah entrusted Ajitsingh with the suba of Ajmer also.

### **Decline of Ajitsingh**

The relation between Ajitsingh and Sawai Jaisingh had been strained for quite some time. While going to Jodhpur Ajitsingh met Jaisingh at Kaladhar near Amber and prevailed upon him to marry his daughter Suraj Kanwar. She had been engaged to Jaisingh some eleven years back. Meanwhile Hussain Ali Khan was killed in September, 1720. His brother Abdulla was arrested in November. The downfall of the Saiyad brothers was a big jolt to Ajitsingh.

In May, 1721, Muhammad Shah removed Ajitsingh as subedar of Gujarat. In August he removed him as subedar of Ajmer as well. Ajitsingh rose in revolt against the emperor, who sent a big army against him. He was humbled. He had to surrender as many as 14 parganas including Ajmer, Bhinai, Parbatsar, Sambhar and Nagaur to the Mughals. He also agreed to send his eldest son Abhaysingh to the Mughal court. He reached Jodhpur, a disappointed man, in November, 1723.

Abhaysingh went to Delhi. By now Sawai Jaisingh had acquired very great influence in the Mughal court. Abhaysingh developed close rapport with Jaisingh. The emperor and Jaisingh advised Abhaysingh to get rid of his father Ajitsingh in the 'interest' of Jodhpur. Abhaysingh entrusted this task to his younger brother Bakhatsingh. The young prince entered the palace of the Maharaja at midnight on June 23, 1724 and killed him while he was asleep. Next morning the Rathor chiefs surrounded Bakhatsingh. The latter showed Abhaysingh's letter to them and saved his skin. Ajitsingh was cremated at Mandor. Some 67 persons including his wives, paswans, sahelis and chakars immolated themselves with his body.

No ruler of Marwar and indeed of any other princely state in Rajasthan saw more ups and downs in his life than Ajitsingh. Though

born as Maharaja by virtue of his being the posthumous son of Jaswantsingh, he had lost his State while he was still in his mother's womb. He spent his early childhood as a refugee in Mewar and Sirohi after the faithful Rathor chiefs rescued him miraculously from Aurangzeb at Delhi.

Ajitsingh secured his ancestral State in 1707 after a twenty year long guerilla war fare against the Mughals. He, however, lost it back to the Mughals after a few months. He regained it in July, 1708 with the help of Maharana Amarsingh-II. From now on he continued to expand his territory till 1723, when he had to surrender a number of parganas to the Mughals as a result of his defeat at the hands of Haidarkuli Khan. A year later he met a tragic end at the hands of his own son.

In ruthless pursuit of his objectives, Ajitsingh could go to any length. He exiled his own saviour Durgadas and got Mukand Das Champawat murdered because both held mansab and jagirs directly from the emperor. For his self aggrandisement he liquidated his own kinsmen Mohansingh and Mokhamsingh of Nagaur. He attacked and subjugated Kishangarh forgetting that its ruler Rajsingh had rendered valuable help to him in the past. He joined hands with the Saiyad brothers and got his own son-in-law Farruksiyar murdered simply because the latter removed him as subedar of Gujarat on charges of mismanagement and corruption. He destroyed mosques and stopped ajan at Jodhpur but distributed clothes and money to Kazis and Mullas at Ahmedabad.

### **Abheysingh's failure**

On the death of Ajitsingh his eldest son Abhaysingh declared himself as ruler of Jodhpur at Delhi itself. The emperor, Muhammad Sahab not only conferred appropriate mansab on him but also returned to him some of the paragnas which the emperor had forfeited in 1723 during the reign of Ajitsingh.

According to the time honoured custom Abhaysingh should have straight away proceeded to Jodhpur to pay homage to the late Maharaja and to observe state-mourning as a mark of respect to the departed soul. Instead he went to Mathura and married the daughter of S. Jaisingh of Amber even during the period of mourning. The result was the most of the Rathor samants left his company and went away to Marwar where they joined hands with his rebel brothers, Anandsingh and Raisingh. The two brothers occupied Idar, the jagir given to Abhaysingh by the emperor.

After spending some time at Mathura and Delhi with his newly wed Rani, Abhaysingh came to Jodhpur accompanied by 5000 Kachhava sowars made available by his father-in-law S. Jaisingh. From there he went to Jalor and Sojat and occupied Nagaur. In 1725 he conferred the jagir of Nagaur and title of Rajadhiraj on his brother Bakhatsingh who was responsible for the cold blooded murder of his father and some of his own brothers<sup>1</sup>.

In 1730 Abhaysingh was appointed as subedar of Gujarat. He assumed charge of the suba in October but not before a bloody battle with Sarbuland Khan, the former subedar. Sarbuland Khan ultimately left Gujarat after receiving Rs. 1.00 lakh from the Maharaja.

During his two years stay in Gujarat, Abhaysingh harassed the trading community engaged in silk trade and recovered lakhs of rupees from it. This destroyed the Gujarat silk trade not only in India but also with foreign countries like Turkey, Iran, Iraq and Arabia. He extorted money in various ways from the poor and the rich alike. His only achievement as subedar of Gujarat was to capture Baroda after killing Pilaji Gayakwar, the Marahata Hakim of Baroda, by fraud. Even this small success was short lived. The widow of the Marahata ruler, Khande Rao Dabhade, recaptured Baroda. The Maharaja agreed to pay 'Choath' to the Marahatas and also paid Rs. 80,000 as war damages to the widow.

In 1732 Abhaysingh appointed Ratansingh Bhandari as his assistant in Gujarat and himself left Ahmedabad for Delhi. Bhandari and his subordinates had a field day in the suba. They created terror in Gujarat and looted the people in an unabashed manner. A number of people even committed suicide. The traders left the suba for good. Gujarat had never experienced such a tyranny in the past. Ultimately the emperor was obliged to replace Abhaysingh by Moin Khan as subedar of Gujarat in 1737.

In 1734 Bakhat Singh led an expedition against Bikaner. Abhaysingh also joined him. The two armies failed to capture the Bikaner fort. Ultimately Maharana Sangramsingh II of Mewar intervened and brought peace between the two Rathor houses. Abhaysingh and Bakhatsingh returned to Marwar empty handed.

In 1739 differences arose between the two brothers, Abhaysingh and Bakhatsingh, on some domestic issue. The same year Abhaysingh launched an attack against Bikaner. Bakhatsingh joined hands with Maharaja Zorawarsingh of Bikaner and captured Merta. Abhaysingh had to abandon his campaign.

1. G.H. Ojha, *Jodhpur Rajya ka Itihas*, p.618

In 1740 Abhaysingh again attacked Bikaner in league with some rebel Thakurs of Bikaner. Zorawarsingh approached S.Jaisingh of Jaipur for help. Since Abhaysingh was Jaisingh's son-in-law, he initially hesitated to side with Bikaner. When it was pointed out to him that if Jodhpur occupied Bikaner, it would be a constant threat to Jaipur that Jaisingh led an expedition against Jodhpur with a big army. Maharana Sangramsingh again intervened at the request of Abhaysingh. The Marwar army withdrew from Bikaner. Jaisingh too returned to Jaipur but only after recovering an amount of Rs. 12 lakhs from Abhaysingh.

In 1743 S.Jaisingh, died. Taking advantage of his death Abhaysingh occupied Ajmer. Jaisingh's son and successor Iswarisingh decided to dislodge Abhaysingh from Ajmer. But some mediators brought the two rulers together and the confrontation was averted.

In 1746 Maharaja Zorawarsingh of Bikaner died without a male issue. The local sardars put his uncle's younger son Gajsingh on the throne. His elder brother Amarsingh sought the help of Abhaysingh against Gajsingh. Abhaysingh was ever ready to fish in the troubled waters. He sent a big army against Gajsingh. The Marwar army was, however, badly mauled to the consternation of Abhaysingh.

Abhaysingh died in 1749 unsung and unwept. He had ascended the throne with a stigma that he had got his father murdered. As subedar of Gujarat he plundered the province and destroyed its silk trade. He led several expeditions against Bikaner but had to face ignominious defeat every time. He left the treasury empty when he died. In short his 25 years rule was nothing but a disaster for Jodhpur.

### **A foolish ruler**

Ramsingh succeeded his father Abhaysingh when he was 19 years old. His first act as a ruler was to honour a drummer (Dholi) Amia, a slave (Chakar) Chanda and a bangle maker (Chudigar) Sarfuddin with costly gifts. He personally went to Riyan to persuade the local chief to part with his attractive chakar Vijia and hand him over to him. When the chief reluctantly obliged him, the Maharaja gave Vijia costly ornaments and dresses and took him in a procession in a palanquin to his camp<sup>1</sup>. He also indulged in immoral and unnatural acts with two young boys of a chief.

Ramsingh annoyed a number of Rathor samants by his foolish actions. Most of them soon deserted him. Bakhatsingh, Ramsingh's

1. Jodhpur Rajya Ki Khyat. Pt.II. p 163-65.

uncle, sent customary teeka (presents) to Ramsingh. The Maharaja not only returned the presents scornfully but also misbehaved with Bakhat Singh's foster mother who had brought the 'teeka'. The reason was that Bakhatsingh refused to accede to his request to hand over the pargana of Jalor to him. This led to a bitter feud between the uncle and the nephew in which Maharaja Gajsingh of Bikaner sided with Bakhatsingh and Maharaja Iswarisingh of Jaipur with Ramsingh. A number of battles, which took place between the forces of Ramsingh and Bakhat Singh, ended in a draw. Unfortunately for Ramsingh his ally Iswarisingh died in 1750. The very next year Bakhatsingh captured Jodhpur and became ruler in place of Ramsingh. Thus came to an end the two year inglorious rule of Ramsingh.

Bakhatsingh ascended the Marwar throne on July 8, 1757. He suppressed the rebellion of the chief of Bhadrajoon and reshuffled the jagirs of a number of thikanedars. The cruel Maharaja ordered the blinding of his two brothers who were in jail in Nagaur fort. Hearing the news both of them committed suicide. Bakhatsingh confiscated the property of Ramsingh's brother and physically tortured the mutsaddies who had sided with Ramsingh.

Soon after Bakhatsingh occupied Jodhpur, Ramsingh had gone to Maroth from where he controlled the parganas of Parbatsar and Sambhar. He also captured Ajmer and Phalodi with the help of Marahatas. Bakhatsingh rushed to Ajmer. Ramsingh and the Marahatas left Ajmer without giving a fight. This was the sole achievement of Bakhatsingh. He died in September, 1752.

### **Mixed fortune of Vijaysingh**

Vijaysingh succeeded his father Bakhatsingh. Ramsingh again raised his head. With the help of Marahatas he defeated Vijaysingh in the battle of Gangarda in September, 1754. Vijaysingh took shelter in Nagaur fort. Ramsingh laid a seige to the fort. It was lifted in February, 1756 after a settlement was reached. While the parganas of Jodhpur, Nagaur, Merta etc. were retained by Vijaysingh, the parganas of Jalor, Maroth and Sojat were handed over to Ramsingh. The Marahatas got Rs. 51.00 lakhs and Ajmer in the process.

In 1768 Maharana Arisingh of Mewar handed over the pargana of Gorwar to Vijaysingh in lieu of his promise to dispossess Ratansingh, the pretender to the Mewar throne from the fort of Kumbhalgarh. Vijaysingh failed to fulfill the promise. In spite of this he refused to give

up the occupation of Gorwar to the consternation of the poor Maharana who was hardly in a position to cross sword with the Rathors. He occupied Sambhar in 1777 and established his authority over Amarkot in Sindh.

In 1787 Mahadaji Sindhia led an expedition against Jaipur. In response to an SOS from Sawai Pratapsingh, Vijaysingh dispatched a big army which played a leading role in defeating the Sindhia at the battle of Tunga. An unknown poet had correctly said on the occasion "*Kala beri (Marahatas) ayaiya ghumar chad ghoda, udlati Amer ne rakhi Rathoran*"<sup>1</sup>. The Rathors deprived the fleeing Marahata army of their cannons and other belongings. The same year Vijaysingh captured Ajmer from the Marahatas. The latter, however, avenged the defeat in 1790 and recaptured Ajmer.

Being worried over the Marahata menace, Vijaysingh approached Lord Carniwalis of the East India Company for help. He assured him that Jaipur and Jodhpur would extend their full cooperation in the establishment of the rule of the East India Company over whole of India<sup>2</sup>. The British were, however, hesitant to accept the invitation.

The last few years of Vijaysingh's life were full of agony due to the family feud for which he himself was responsible. Under the influence of his concubine (paswan), Gulabrai, he designated his fifth son Shersingh as his heir apparent in preference to the rightful claimant Bhimsingh—the son of his eldest deceased son Bhomsingh. Gulabrai was conferred the jagir of Jalor. The annoyed Rathor chiefs assassinated her in April, 1792. Soon thereafter Bhimsingh and his supporters occupied Jodhpur town and the fort while Vijaysingh was camping at Balsamand. Bhimsingh vacated Jodhpur after ten months when he was given the jagir of Siwana. The Maharaja died on July, 1793 at an age of 64 after 40 years of rule.

### War of succession

Vijaysingh was survived by his sons Jalamsingh, Shersingh and Sanwatsingh and grand sons Bhimsingh, Mansingh and Soorsingh. Like the sons of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb, each one of them wanted to become the ruler of Jodhpur. Bhimsingh, who was the rightful claimant

1. Courtsey Onkarsingh I.A.S (Retd.). Its literary meaning is that when the blacks (Marahatas) charged their horses in the battle, it was the Rathors who saved Amber from falling into the hands of Marahatas.
2. Ojha, Jodhpur: *Rajya Ka Itihas*, p. 745-46.

to the throne by virtue of being the son of the eldest deceased son of Vijaysingh, was in Jaisalmer at the time of the death of Vijaysingh. When he heard the news of the death of his grand father, the first thing he did was to seek the support of Sawaisingh, the all powerful chief of Pokaran. Sawaisingh agreed to support him in the war of succession and accompanied Bhimsingh on his way to Jodhpur. The presence of Sawaisingh was enough to silence the rival candidates. Bhimsingh was installed on the throne with the booming of guns from the Jodhpur fort. Jalamsingh and Mansingh, who were camping on the outskirts of the city watching the developments, realised that it was all over. Jalamsingh left for Udaipur and Mansingh for his jagir of Jalor. The other claimants staying in the fort begged for their lives. Bhimsingh, however, got them murdered.

After consolidating his position further, Bhimsingh sent an expedition in 1797 to Jalor against Mansingh. The army failed to capture the town and the fort. In 1802 Bhimsingh sent additional forces to Jalor under the command of Singhavi Indarraaj. Singhavi captured the town and tightened the noose around the fort. In the meanwhile Bhimsingh died without an issue. Within 10 years Marwar again faced the problem of succession.

Singhavi Indarraaj and most of the Rathor samants participating in the Jalor-campaign felt that Mansingh was the rightful claimant to the throne. Ordering cease-fire, they invited Mansingh to accompany them to Jodhpur and occupy the throne. Mansingh reached Jodhpur on November 5, 1803 but ascended the throne formally on January 17, 1804 without resistance from any quarter. Soon it came to be known that one of the widows of the late Maharaja was pregnant. Thakur Sawaisingh of Pokaran, who was a close confidant of Bhimsingh, asked Mansingh as to what he proposed to do in case a male child was born to Bhimsingh's widow. Mansingh replied that in that situation he would make the child the Maharaja and would himself retire to his old jagir of Jalor. No one was prepared to place reliance on the words of Mansingh. Soon after the birth of a son from the Maharani, he was secretly taken to Khetari in Sekhawati. The child was named Dhonkalsingh. Mansingh refused to recognise the child as the son of Bhimsingh and termed him as a 'pretender' produced by his opponents.

One of the earliest acts of Mansingh after ascending the throne was to take revenge against those who were connected with the killing

of his uncles and a cousin. He got brutally murdered two of them and sent quite a few others to jail. He annexed Sirohi, whose ruler Bairishal had refused to provide shelter to his wife and children when Jalor was under seige.

By now the East India Company had extended its sway to north India. Mansingh was interested in entering into treaty relationship with the Company in view of the increasing Marahata menace to his State. In 1803, General Lake sent a draft of the treaty to Mansingh. The Maharaja did not like a few of its provisions and sent a revised draft to the General. In the meanwhile a settlement was reached between the Marahata leader Jawant Rao Holkar and the Maharaja. The Holkar left for Malwa. Mansingh showed no more interest in the treaty with the Company.

In the critical phase of Mansingh's life, when Jalor fort was under seige by the powerful forces of his arch enemy and cousin Bhimsingh, Ayash Deonath of Goraknath sect had forecast that Mansingh would soon become the ruler of Jodhpur. As luck would have it, Mansingh did indeed become the ruler of Jodhpur within a few days of the prophecy made by Deonath. A grateful Mansingh invited him to Jodhpur and made him his 'guru'. In 1805 he built the famous temple known as Maha Mandir and made Deonath as its chief priest. Henceforth Deonath and later on his brother Bhimnath and son Ladoonath played a dominating role in the power politics of Jodhpur.

Krishna Kumari, daughter of Maharana Bhimsingh of Udaipur, was engaged to Maharaja Bhimsingh of Jodhpur in 1802. As the latter died in 1803, she was engaged to Maharaja Jagatsingh of Jaipur. Mansingh took it as an affront to him as he thought that the princess should have been married to him by virtue of his being the successor of Bhimsingh. Krishna Kumari thus became a bone of contention between the house of Kachhavas and that of Rathors in which the house of Shishodiyas became a scap-goat.

In January 1806 Maharana Bhimsingh sent the teeka to Jagatsingh to formalise his engagement with Krishna Kumari. The teeka was escorted by a ten thousand strong Kachhava force. The Rathor army led by Singavi Indar Raj intercepted it near Shahpura. The Raja of Shahpura intervened and saved the situation. The teeka was sent back to Udaipur. The opposing armies returned to their respective States. In June 1806 Indarraaj and Dewan Ramchandra of Jaipur brought about a settlement between the two warring princes. It was decided that neither of them would marry Krishna Kumari.



The peace between Jaipur and Jodhpur was too fragile to last long. Jagatsingh had agreed to the settlement only due to compulsion of circumstances. At this juncture Sawaisingh, the articulated chief of Pokaran, came in open support of Dhunkalsingh who was being brought up at Khetari. Sawaisingh succeeded in forming a powerful front consisting of Jaipur, Bikaner, Khetari and some Rathor chiefs. Amir Khan Pindari too joined the front. The joint forces occupied most of the parganas of Jodhpur and also occupied Jodhpur. Maharaja Mansingh found himself confined in the Jodhpur fort. Thanks, however, to the diplomacy of Singhvi Indarraaj, Amir Khan crossed over to Mansingh and saved the State.

Maharaja Mansingh now took full advantage of his newly found friendship with Amir Khan. In accordance with the understanding reached with Mansingh, Amir Khan pretended that he would take 'revenge' against Mansingh for his refusal to pay the dues for the services rendered by him. He sent feelers to Sawaisingh that he was ready to help him in installing Dhunkalsingh on the Jodhpur throne. He met Sawaisingh at a durgarh near Nagaur and swore by the holy Quran of his loyalty to him. He invited him to his base camp at Mandawa for finalising the plan. Sawaisingh fell in his trap. Accompanied by some of his colleagues and a thousand supporters, he reached Mandawa on March 30, 1808, where a 'royal reception' awaited him in a huge shamiyana put up for the occasion. As they waited in the shamiyana for the arrival of Amir Khan, the strings of the shamiyana were cut down. The shamiyana fell down over them. The guns did the rest. The heads of Sawaisingh and three other rebel Rathor chiefs were sent to Mansingh. Mansingh celebrated the event little believing that the bandit leader, who had obliged him so much, might one day turn thirsty even for his own blood.

Blushed with his victory over Jaipur and elimination of Sawaisingh, Mansingh sent his army against Bikaner under the command of Indarraaj Singhvi in 1808. The Jodhpur forces defeated the Bikaner army near Gajner but failed to capture the Bikaner fort for quite some time. The impatient Mansingh suspected the bonafides of Indarraaj and sent another army under Kalayanmal Lodha, younger son of Shahmal Lodha. In the absence of cooperation from Indarraaj, Lodha was defeated and arrested. On being released Lodha returned to Jodhpur. Indar Raj now laid a siege to the fort. A prolonged war with Jodhpur exhausted the meagre resources of men and money of Bikaner. Suratsingh signed the instrument of surrender in November 1808 according to which

Bikaner ceded Phalodi to Jodhpur and also agreed to pay Rs 4.00 lakhs as war damages.

Mansingh now turned his eyes on Jaipur. Amir Khan started plundering and ravaging the Jaipur State. Jagatsingh was no more interested in involving his State in war with Jodhpur. He invited the representatives of Maharaja Mansingh for a negotiated settlement. It was agreed that Jagatsingh would not help Dhunkalsingh and that neither of the rulers would marry Krishna Kumari. It was also agreed that Jagatsingh would marry his sister to Mansingh and Mansingh would marry his daughter to Jagatsingh.

Having taken care of Bikaner and Jaipur, Mansingh was now bent upon humbling Maharana Bhimsingh of Mewar. Notwithstanding the pact signed between him and Jagatsingh, he dispatched Amirkhan at the head of a big army to Udaipur and conveyed to the Maharana either to marry Krishna Kumari to him or kill her. The coward Maharana poisoned his daughter to the eternal shame of the house of Shishodias.

### **Amirkhan wrought havoc**

Amirkhan now became a dominating factor in Marwar by virtue of his having restored the prestige of the State. He would often go to Jodhpur and demand money from the Maharaja. In 1814 he devastated the country-side and collected booty in whatever form he could do. By now Mansingh himself had paid Rs 18 lakhs to Amirkhan in spite of the poor state of his finances.

Mansingh delegated all his powers of administration to Singhvi Indarraaj and Ayash Deonath. Indarraaj tried to effect economy in the expenditure to improve the financial position of the State but created a large number of enemies among the Rathor sardars and mutsaddies. In August 1815 Amirkhan came to Jodhpur to recover 'dues' of Rs 5.00 lakhs from the Maharaja. He demanded the parganas of Nagaur and Merta in lieu of the above dues. Indarraaj opposed the proposal. This gave an opportunity to his enemies, which included among others Akhey Chand Mehta, Thakur Kesarisingh of Asop, Bakhatawarsingh of Ahuwa, Ayas Soornath etc, to turn Amirkhan against him. They told Amirkhan that Indarraaj and Ayash Deonath were coming in the way in the matter of payment of his dues. They also told him that they were prepared to pay him Rs 7.00 lakhs, if he liquidated both of them. Chattarsingh son of Mansingh and his mother also joined the conspiracy. They paid Rs 5.00 lakhs immediately as advance to Amirkhan. The bandit leader accepted the assignment.

Amir Khan laid out his plans with military thoroughness. He put his men at various strategic points in the city. On October 10, 1815 Akhey Chand and his co-conspirators informed him that Indarraaj and Deonath were discussing certain matters in a particular room in the fort. Amir Khan sent about 2 dozen armed Afghans who killed both of them along with a few others. When Mansingh heard of the gruesome killings, he ordered for the liquidation of the gang. Amirkhan warned the Maharaja that if any bodily harm was done to his men, he would ravage the city including the Maha Mandir. The threat worked. The killers escaped scot free.

Disgusted with the state of affair, the Maharaja went into seclusion and pretended to be mad. In April 1817 Indarraaj's brother Gulraj Singhvi was arrested and murdered. The same month the Maharaja was made to abdicate his powers in favour of his son Chhatarsingh. Mehta Akhechand now became Dewan.

#### **Treaty with British.**

It will be recalled that Mansingh was anxious to enter into treaty relationship with the East India Company right from the day he assumed the throne in 1803 in view of the constant Marahata menace. As there was difference of opinion on certain issues between Mansingh and the Company the matter was not pursued. In 1816 the trouble from Bapuji Sindhia and Amirkhan was at its height. Mansingh deputed Bishan Ram Ashopa to negotiate a treaty with Metcalf, the Company's resident at Delhi. In the meanwhile there was a change of guards at Jodhpur. The treaty with the Company was thus signed by Chhatarsingh on January 16, 1818. The Governor General approved it.

Under the treaty the Company became responsible for the defence of Jodhpur. The State agreed to pay tribute (khiraj) to the extent of Rs 10800 per annum as was being paid to the Sindhias. It accepted the Company as a paramount power and agreed not to enter into relationship with any ruler without the previous approval of the Company. Jodhpur thus became subservient to the Company.

#### **The Administration.**

It was during the period of Rao Chunda (1383-1423) that the territory occupied by the Rathors took the shape of a state. He made Mandor, the seat of the former Pratihara rulers, as his capital which invested him with the symbol of royalty in the eyes of the people. Rao

Jodha shifted the capital from Mandor to Jodhpur, the city founded by him in 1458.

Rao Maldeo, who ascended the Rathor throne in 1531, expanded his territory considerably. He felt the need of setting up some sort of administration so that he could maintain effective control over the far flung areas of his principality. He divided it into a number of units and put each unit under the charge of one of his trusted kinsmen. This was the beginning of the hereditary jagir system in Marwar which survived for the next four hundred years. Of course, the rulers often shuffled and some time even confiscated the jagirs.

The main preoccupation of the rulers during the pre-Mughal period was to consolidate and protect their territory from invasions and in this the Jagirdars played a pivotal role. No wonder, the Jagirdars became powerful and dominated the administration not only in the parganas but at the seat of the Government as well. The administration was, however, primitive and rudimentary. Its main feature was 'might is right'.

A wind of change in the administration came in Marwar when the Mughal emperor Akbar occupied the State during the period of Rao Chandrasen (1562-1581). The Mughal faujdar introduced revenue system in some of the parganas on Mughal lines. In 1583, the Mughals put Mota Raja Udaisingh on the Marwar throne. The Mota Raja appointed Bhati Govinddas as his chief adviser. He was well conversant with the administrative set-up of the Mughals. He started organising the administration of the State on the Mughal pattern and continued his good work during the reign of Raja Soorsingh.

In the new set-up the highest functionary was 'Pradhan' who acted as the principal adviser to the ruler. The entire civil and military administration was placed under him. The office became hereditary. For years it was held by the chiefs of Pokaran and then generally by the chiefs of Ahuwa. The holders of the office being Jagirdars, they did not receive any salary.

The official next in importance after the Pradhan was Diwan. The post of Diwan was not hereditary. He was from the elite class known as 'Mutasaddies'. As there was always a rivalry between the ruler and the Pradhan, the ruler relied more on the Diwan than on the Pradhan. The Diwan, therefore, gradually assumed all the powers of the Pradhan.

The Baxi was the chief treasury officer and looked after the soldiers wounded during the wars. The Kotwal was responsible for maintaining law and order. The officer incharge of the department of Sayar (customs) was known as Daroga Sayar. There were 36 Karkhanas dealing with different aspects of administration.

The State was divided into 23 parganas each in charge of a Hakim. The Hakim was head of revenue, civil and military administration in the paragna. He was some time expected to lead military expedition too. He was assisted by a Naib Hakim and Kanungos, Patwaris, Taphedars and Sahanas etc. in the discharge of his functions. There were no laws, rules or regulations. Subject to the instructions of the ruler, the Hakim was the local despot whose words were law. He exploited the people and made fast bucks, for he knew that he would have to present a huge amount to the ruler when demanded. A number of Hakims and other senior officials including the famous historian and Diwan, Mutha Nainsi and his brother Sundardas had to die when they failed to pay the money demanded by the rulers.

One of the important measures introduced by Bhati Govind-das was the reorganisation of the ruler's court. He re-established the supremacy of the ruler over the Jagirdars. The appointments made on important posts from amongst the Mutsaddies further eroded the authority of jagirdars.

While petty crimes and other cases were disposed of by local Panchayats, big cases and suits were decided by the Hakim. An appeal against his decision was heard by the Daroga Adalat. The second appeal was heard by the Diwan. The ruler, ofcourse, was the supreme judicial authority who could hear any case and decide the matter in any manner he liked.

### **The Jagirdars.**

The feudal order, or what is commonly known as Jagirdari system, came into being in Marwar along with the advent of the Rathor dynasty. It took an institutional shape during the reign of Rao Maldeo (1532-1562). He divided the State into a number of units and put each unit in charge of a Rathor sardar. In course of time these units became hereditary jagirs. Thus practically the entire territory of the State came to be held by the Jagirdars. Even as late as 1830 A.D. nearly 83% of the land and 3726 out of 4376 villages of the State were part of the jagir area.<sup>1</sup>

1. Dr. Padmja Sharma, *Maharaja Mansingh our Unaka Kal*, p. 203—204

Since the jagirs were held mostly by the Rathors claiming direct kin-ship with the ruling family, the Jagirdars regarded the ruler no more than their equal or at best the first among equals during the pre-Mughal period. They decided all question of war and peace and even muddled in matters of succession to the throne. They exercised a predominant influence in the State as general and administrator. In their own jagirs they enjoyed unfettered administrative and judicial powers and imposed taxes and lag bags without let or hinderence from the ruler. They paid no tax of any kind to the State initially.

There had been occasions when Jagirdars raised standard of revolt against the ruler. And yet when the time came they responded to the call of their Rathor sovereign for the defence of the State or for expansion in its territories and shed their blood umpteen times. In the medieval times no ruler in Rajasthan depended more on his nobility than the rulers of Marwar. Thakur Sawaisingh of Pokaran was not very much wrong when he boasted that he carried the destiny of Marwar in the seathe of his sword.

When Jodhpur came under the umbrella of the Mughals during the reign of Mota Raja Udaisingh (1583-1595), the situation changed to some extent. The ruler could now look forward to the Mughals for help whenever the Jagirdars defied him. Following the Mughal pattern Udaisingh introduced the system of 'Peshkash'. Henceforth on the death of a Jagirdar, his successor had to get the patta of the jagir renewed on payment of a prescribed fee called 'Peshkash'. The levy was later on termed as 'Hukamnama'. The Jagirdars were also required to pay to the State some sort of annual tax on the basis of "Rekh"<sup>1</sup>. They were also required to be present in the capital alongwith their 'jamiyats' (irregular force) as directed by the ruler from time to time.

During the reign of Maharaja Soorsingh (1595-1619), his Pradhan Bhati Govinddas, revised the age old protocol of the court. A new classification of Jagirdars was undertaken. In the first category were the Jagirdars who were related to the ruler by blood. In the second were those whose ancestors had sacrificed their lives on the battle field in the cause of Marwar. In the last category were the 'inamdars' who were awarded jagirs on account of their personal loyalty to the ruler. Then there was a category of petty land holders known as Bhomias who performed police duties particularly in the rural area. They could also be drafted in the army in the event of war.

1. The income of a jagir as assumed by the State.

While the Mughals undoubtedly gave security to the ruler against his unruly Jagirdars, they also used the latter as a trump card against the ruler so that he might not raise his head against the central authority. For this purpose, they some time granted jagirs and mansabs to the samants direct over the head of the ruler.

During the last phase of the Mughal empire, some of the Jagirdars rose in revolt against the ruler. Thakur Sawaisingh of Pokaran formed a grand alliance consisting of Maharaja Jagatsingh of Jaipur, Maharaja Suratsingh of Bikaner, Thakur Dhunkalsingh, the pretender to the Marwar throne, Amirkhan Pindari, a good number of Jagirdars of Marwar and others against Maharaja Mansingh and nearly succeeded in destroying the Jodhpur State.

### **The Mutsaddies.**

If the samants had been the back-bone of the Rathor rulers of Marwar for centuries, they had also been the source of trouble to them. Though their powers had been curbed to some extent during the reign of Mota Raja Udaisingh and Raja Soorsingh, they continued to maintain their supremacy in the State. When Maharaja Jaswantsingh ascended the throne in 1638 AD, he realised that their monopoly of power in the administration was conducive neither to the people nor to the rulers themselves.

In 1643, Jaswantsingh dismissed his all powerful "Pradhan", Mahesdash Rathor of Jalor and appointed Mehta Gopaldas in his place. Submissive as the new Pradhan was, the Maharaja had now free hand to appoint persons of his choice on various high civil and military posts. The same year the Mers created trouble in Magara area. The Maharaja took the opportunity to entrust the task of quelling the disturbances to Muhanot Nensi, an Oswal by caste, in place of a samant. Similarly when Mahecha Maheshdas started ravaging the Rad-dada area, he sent Muhnot Jainmal, father of Nensi, to crush the revolt. Both of them eminently accomplished their respective missions. This was the beginning of the emergence of a new elite known as 'Mutsaddies' from amongst the Oswal community.

In 1645 Nensi and his brother Sunderdas crushed the rebellion of Rawat Ramchandra in Sojat. In 1650, Muhanot Nensi, Bhandari Jagannath, Singhvi Pratapmal and others captured Pokaran and defeated Bhati Ramchandra at Jaisalmer. They proved that they could equally lead the army in the battlefield successfully.

Nensi rose to the position of Pradhan in 1658. He served in this capacity with distinction for nearly a decade. In 1667 he met the same fate as persons in eminent positions generally met in Marwar during those days. He was put behind bars along with his brother Sundardas. The Maharaja demanded Rs 1.00 lakh from each of the Muhanot brothers for their release. They however, refused to oblige. They committed suicide while they were being taken from Aurangabad to Jodhpur in August, 1670.

After Muhanots came the Bhandaris. During the rule of Maharaja Ajitsingh the Bhandaris dominated the scene. Bhandaris Bithaldas and Raghunathsingh served as Diwans. Bhandari Khinvasingh was the trouble shooter of the Maharaja. For quite a few years he served as Maharaja's Vakil (ambassador) at Delhi and performed the delicate task with consummate skill. His contribution to the ascendancy of the Maharaja in the Mughal court was significant.

During the two spells of his governorship of Gujarat, the Maharaja had Bhandaris Vijaysingh and Anoopsingh as his deputies. Besides, a number of Bhandaris held the posts of Hakims in the parganas. Marwar had thus virtually a "Bhandariraj" during the reign of Ajitsingh. It is, therefore, an irony that a Bhandari and that too Raghunathsingh should have been instrumental in hatching a conspiracy for the murder of a Maharaja who was generous to the fault to the Bhandaris.

The Bhandaris soon received a set back. Even Maharaja Abhaysingh for whose 'benefit' the assassination of his father was carried out, could not save them from the wrath of the Rathor samants. The new Maharaja had to arrest Raghunathsingh and Khinvasingh. It was only after the Maharaja was fully in saddle that he could release them. He appointed Bhandari Amarsingh as his deputy in Gujarat.

The Bhandaris received a big jolt when Bakhatawarsingh became ruler of Jodhpur. In a short span of one year of his reign he dismissed a number of Bhandaris holding important positions and put quite a few of them in prison. On the near eclipse of Bhandaris, some new Oswal families emerged on the political scene of Marwar. The leading among them were Singhavis, Lodhas and Mehtas. A few Bhandaris too occupied important positions but under the shadow of Singhavis.

During the tenure of Maharaja Vijaysingh, Singhavi Akheraj served as his Diwan and Singhvi Bhim Raj as Fauj-Musahib (Chief of Army). One Lodha Shahmal had joined the court of Vijaysingh in 1783.



He soon won the confidence of the Maharaja. He was conferred the hereditary title of 'Rao Raja Shamsheer Bahadur' for his role in the 'Godwar affair'. Later on the Maharaja sent him to Jalor as Fauj-Musahib with his grand son Mansingh. Shahmal fought many a battle against the forces of Bheemsingh, who had succeeded Vijaysingh as ruler of Jodhpur in 1793. In one of the battles at Bilada, Mehkaran, brother of Shahmal, was killed.

On his accession to the throne Bhimsingh sent an expedition against Mansingh in 1797 under Singhvi Akheraj. The latter captured whole of Jalor pargana except the town and fort of Jalor. He, however, could not make further head way. Bhimsingh recalled him and put him behind bars. He had, perhaps, reports that Mansingh had won him over to his side.

In 1801, Bhimsingh sent another expedition against Mansingh under the command of Singhvi Banraj. He sent further reinforcements under Singhvi Indarraaj, his brother Gulraj and Bhandari Gangaram. They captured Jalor town, though Banraj was killed in action. The Jodhpur forces now laid the seige to the fort which was the last bastion of Mansingh.

While the seige of the fort was still on, Singhavi Indarraaj received the news of Bhimsingh's death. The Maharaja had left no male issue. Indar Raj knew that Maharani Derawal, widow of the late Maharaja, was pregnant. He also knew that if a male child was born to her and succeeded the throne, Thakur Sawaisingh and Dhabhai Sambhudan would call the shots in the State. Neither of them was friendly to him. He felt that Mansingh would be the best bet in the circumstances. He lifted the seige of Jalor fort and led Mansingh to Jodhpur.

Mansingh entered the fort without resistance from any quarter in November 1803. Apparently there was none at the moment around whom forces opposed to him could rally round. Maharani Derawal had yet to deliver. The Thakur of Pokaran, Sawaisingh, however, sounded a warning in unequivocal terms that only a ruler put up by the Rathors and not by the Banias (Indar Raj etc.) could survive the Rathor throne. While Singhavi Indarraaj and Bhandari Gangaram were elevated as Musahib and Diwan respectively for their faithful services, Sawaisingh waited for an opportunity to strike.

In May 1804 Maharani Derawal gave birth to a male child. The child named as Dhonkalsingh was shifted secretly to his maternal uncle's place at Khetadi under the supervision of Sawaisingh. The latter now gathered support of several Rathor samants and the ruler of Bikaner, Suratsingh, for placing the new child on the Marwar throne in place of Mansingh.

Mansingh started consolidating his position. He despatched armies to Sirohi and Ghanerao under the command of Mehta Gyanmal and Mehta Sahib Chandra respectively and occupied both the places. The very next year i.e. 1804, the Sekhawats of Khetadi, Nawalgarh and Sikar attacked Deedwana under the banner of Dhonkalsingh, the pretender to the Marwar throne. The attack was, however, repulsed. Mansingh now took up arms against Maharaja Jagatsingh of Jaipur on the issue of marriage of Mewar princess, Krishna Kumari. Singhvi Indarraaj was aware of the consequences of war against Jaipur in the context of serious internal threat to Mansingh. Indarraaj reached an understanding with his counter part in Jaipur, Diwan Ram Chandra to the effect that neither of the rulers would marry Krishna Kumari. Both the rulers were, however, itching for a show down. Mansingh not only ignored the advice of Indarraaj but also put him behind bars along with his colleague Bhandari Gangaram. This proved his own undoing.

In the war which started in 1807, Dhonkalsingh and his supporters Maharaja Bikaner, Sawaisingh and several other Rathor sardars joined the camp of Jagatsingh. As if the combination was not already formidable, the Pindari leader Amirkhan also jumped into the fray on the side of Jagatsingh. The various parganas of Marwar fell like a house of cards. Even the city of Jodhpur was captured by the forces of Jaipur. Mansingh took shelter in the Jodhpur fort. Jagatsingh and his allies laid siege to the fort.

When the noose around the fort tightened, Mansingh realised his folly. He released Singhavi Indarraaj and Bhandari Gangaram and authorised them to negotiate peace with Jaipur. The seasoned Mutsaddies entered into negotiations with Sawaisingh, the kingpin of the enemy camp. Sawaisingh demanded that Dhonkalsingh should be made the ruler of Marwar, Mansingh should go to his old jagir of Jalor and pay Rs 22 lakhs as war reparations. The terms were obviously unacceptable to Indarraaj but he sought time to think over them. In the meanwhile, Indarraaj sent Lodha Shabmal to the Marahata leader, Daulat Ram Sindhia for

seeking his help. Sindhia did not directly come to his help. He, however, pressurised Jagatsingh to discontinue payment of a huge daily allowance to Amirkhan and his army. This worked. Indarraaj successfully manoeuvred Amirkhan to cross over to Mansingh's side.

Indarraaj raised some force and decided upon a diversionary move so as to reduce pressure on Jodhpur fort. At his instance Amirkhan attacked Jaipur. Jagatsingh dispatched an army of 50,000 to prevent Amirkhan from entering into the Jaipur territory. Amirkhan decisively defeated the Jaipur forces at Phagi. Indarraaj joined Amirkhan at Sambhar. When Jagatsingh heard of his army's defeat, he lost his nerve. Leaving his allies in the lurch he returned to Jaipur. His other allies Suratsingh, Sawaisingh and Dhonkalsingh also left Jodhpur for their respective destinations in utter disappointment. Marwar was once again free from enemy and credit for this went to one man i.e. the master strategist Singhvi Indarraaj.

On their triumphant return home, Indarraaj and Amirkhan were accorded a hero's welcome by Maharaja Mansingh. Indarraaj was made Fauj Musahib. On this occasion, Mansingh in a 'Khas-rukka' wrote to him "As of today, I regard this principality as having been given to me by you. So long as Rathors ruled over it, they would remain ever grateful to you."<sup>1</sup> Amirkhan was conferred the title of Nawab. Shortly thereafter Sawaisingh was treacherously murdered by Amirkhan at the instance of Mansingh. A formidable foe had thus been eliminated. Mansingh now sent Indarraaj and Lodha Kalyanmal, brother of Lodha Shahmal, to Bikaner with a large force. Suratsingh surrendered. He had to hand over Phalodi to Jodhpur. He had also to pay several lakhs of rupees to Jodhpur as war damages. At the instance of Indarraaj, Mansingh sent a team of negotiators consisting of Singhvi Fatehraj and Mehta Surajmal and some samants to Jaipur. A treaty of peace was signed. Jaipur undertook not to help Dhonkalsingh any more. Mansingh's dominance over his enemies was complete. The stock of Indarraaj soared.

Then came an anticlimax. The State exchequer was unable to meet the ever increasing demands of the greedy Pindari leader, Amirkhan. By now the Maharaja had delegated all the administrative powers to Singhvi Indarraaj. In September 1815, Amirkhan demanded payment of Rs 6.00 lakh from Mansingh which he failed to pay. The enemies of Indarraaj, who were many, told Amirkhan that Indarraaj was blocking his payments. On October 10, 1815 Amirkhan's men entered

1. Mangilal Bhootodia. "Oswal", P.374.

the room in the fort where Indarraaj and Ayash Deonath, Rajguru of Mansingh, were in conference and shot dead both of them. Poor Mansingh could do nothing either to prevent the tragedy or to punish the culprits. He, however, erected a cenetoph and put Indarraaj's symbolic statue in it. Thus came to a tragic end of a brilliant soldier and a statesman, who saved Jodhpur from being wiped out of the map of Rajasthan.

Amir Khan now reigned supreme in Marwar. Mansingh lost all interest in administration because of the murder of his trusted lieutenant Indarraaj and Guru Ayash Deonath. At the instance of Amirkhan, Indarraaj's opponents Mehta Akhechand and Bhandari Chaturbhaj were appointed as Musahib and Fauj-baxi respectively. Amirkhan extracted Rs 20.00 lakhs from them within two months and left Marwar in December 1815. Meanwhile Singhavi Gulraj, who was in Sojat, recruited an army of 2000 with the help of Bhandaris Prithviraj and Manmal and reached Jodhpur in February 1816 to avenge the murder his brother Indarraaj. The group led by Mehta Akhechand ran away. Some of them were, however, arrested. The Maharaja formally handed over the administration to Gulraj and Fatehraj son of Indarraaj. At this time Sindhia and Amirkhan started looting Marwar. Gulraj failed to curb their activities. This gave an opportunity to Mehta Akhechand and his gang to organise a front against Gulraj. They arrested Gulraj in April 1817 and killed him in the prison. Fatehraj was arrested in Merta by Amirkhan's men but was released on payment of Rs 50000. Fatehraj took shelter in Kuchaman.

Mehta Akheraj in league with Ayash Bhimnath, brother of the slain Ayash Deonath, compelled Mansingh to abdicate his authority in favour of his son Chattarsingh. Mansingh acted accordingly and signed a proclamation appointing Chattarsingh as 'Yuvaraj'. Chattarsingh made Mehta Akheraj as Diwan and Salamsingh, Thakur of Pokaran, as Pradhan. Amirkhan returned to Marwar. Chattarsingh paid him Rs 1.5 lakhs on the condition that he would leave Marwar for good. Compelled by circumstances Chattarsingh entered into a 'subsidiary alliance' with the East India Company in January 1818. The Mutsaddies continued to occupy important posts in the State administration even after the alliance with the Company. But they no more governed the destiny of Marwar. Their golden era was over.

### **The Paliwal Community.**

The Paliwal community had its origin from Pali (Marwar) which has been a centre of international trade since time immemorial. The

caravan carrying goods from India to Arab, Iran, Middle-east and European countries and vice-versa passed through Pali. When Rao Siha, founder of the Rathore dynasty of Marwar, entered the region in 1243 AD, Pali was a flourishing town dominated by the prosperous Brahmins (probably Gaurs) who controlled the trade in the region.

As the Mers constantly harassed the Brahmins and the local chief failed to protect them, they invited Rao Siha for help. The latter responded quickly and crushed the Mers and at the same time occupied Pali. For Siha it was the beginning of the founding of the Rathore state of Marwar. In 1273, a powerful Muslim ruler attacked Pali. Siha was killed in the battle at Bethu, a village near Pali. Thousands of Brahmins were massacred on the sacred day of 'Rakhi'. The Brahmins, who survived the onslaught fled to Gujarat, Mewar, Jaisalmer and other neighbouring areas. These Brahmins were called 'Paliwals' after the name of their ancestral town. They stopped celebrating the festival of Rakhi as a mark of respect for those killed at Pali by the invading Muslim hords on this day.

The largest concentration of Paliwal families is in the Mewar region as they received patronage from the rulers of Mewar. A leading family of Paliwals had the distinction of serving the Maharanas for centuries as their hereditary Rajpurohits. Their ancestor, Sarsal, had come from Sanderao (Pali) and was appointed as Rajpurohit by Maharana Rahap in the thirteenth century AD on the advice of Guru Yashobhadra Soori who had cured Rahap of the dreaded disease of leprosy.

The Rajpurohit family had served the various Maharanas faithfully. A scion of the family, Narayandas, even sacrificed his life to avert a dual between the two princes Pratap and Shaktisingh, both sons of Maharana Udaisingh. Rajpurohit Garibdas was the key-adviser of Maharana Rajsingh I. Whether it was the construction of Rajsamand lake or the war against the Mughal emperor, Maharana would not move an inch without consulting Garibdas. On the occasion of the ceremony held on the completion of the Rajsamand dam, the Maharana granted Garibdas a jagir of twelve villages. He also conferred on him the rare privilege of performing 'tuladan' in gold. It was through the influence of the Rajpurohit family that hundreds of Paliwals had been granted jagirs and maufis by the various Maharanas from time to time.

The Paliwals of Mewar were quite active in the freedom struggle. The well known Vaidya Bhawani Shankar was one of the founders of the Mewar Prajamandal. Apart from him, several prominent Paliwals

including Prof. Narayandas, Nandlal Joshi and Raghunath Paliwal went to jail during the Mewar Prajamandal Satyagrah in 1939 and the Quit India movement in 1942.

A section of Paliwals from Udaipur claim their origin from Gujarat on the ground that the certain customs amongst them and the Paliwals from Gujarat were common. The basis for this claim is too weak to sustain the theory. In fact the Rajpurohit family of Udaipur itself claim that their ancestor had come from Sanderao, Pali. Besides, the well known historians, Tod and Sukhsampatray Bhandari, have held that the community originally belonged to Pali (Marwar).

The Paliwals, who had migrated to Jaisalmer in the wake of the massacre at Pali in the thirteenth century A.D., had to face another ordeal after 5 centuries. During the rule of the hapless Maharawal Moolraj II (1761-1809) his notorious Diwan Swaroopsingh Tawari persecuted the community for extracting money. The community, which brought a lot of prosperity to the State perennially suffering from droughts and famines, had to leave it for good leaving all the belongings behind. As many as 84 villages were desolated and deserted as a result of mass migration of this hard working and intelligent community.

Quite a good number of families of Paliwals had migrated to Dhundhar. Some of the Paliwals served the Kachhava rulers in various capacities, while others were engaged in trade and agriculture. A lawyer Tika Ram Paliwal, from Hindon was President of the Jaipur Prajamandal during freedom struggle and Revenue Minister in Jaipur State and later served as Revenue Minister and Chief Minister of Rajasthan.

U.P. also has some pockets of Paliwals whose ancestors had migrated from Rajasthan. Though their population in the State is small, they are a well knit community. They publish a community periodical. The late Shrikrishna Dutt Paliwal was on the forefront of the freedom struggle and became a minister in the UP Government in the post independence era. In Gujarat and M.P. the Paliwals are a well to do trading community.

### **The economy**

Marwar was part of the great Thar desert. The average rainfall ranged from 12 cms to 30 cms only. The famine visited the State of and on with all its ferocity. The continuous war-fare further aggravated the situation and kept the people migrating from place to place in search of food and security. In this context it is indeed a tribute to the sturdy

Marwari that he withstood not only the onslaught of nature but of man as well.

The economy of the State was based on agriculture and animal husbandry despite scanty and erratic rainfall and recurring droughts. The main crops were Bajara, Jowar, Moong, Moath etc. The wheat, barley and cotton were grown in south eastern part of the State where some irrigation was possible because of the existence of some non-perennial rivers and nullahs and sub-soil water. The Godwar pargana had even poppy cultivation because of comparatively better rainfall.

Animal husbandry played a vital role in the economy of the State. There were well defined breeds of cows such as Gir, Rathi and Tharparkar and bulls such as Nagauri and Malvi. The pastoral community earned their livelihood by sale of ghee, cattle and hide. They, however, suffered a lot during droughts. They took their herds to Gujarat and Malwa during the droughts. A large percentage of their cattle perished in transit.

The sheep and the goat were a major source of livelihood to a large percentage of the population of the western part of the State. They provided milk, ghee, wool and valuable manure as also meat. Interestingly these animals not only survived but multiplied too even during the worst droughts. The only problem with these animals was that they damaged the desert vegetation and thereby threatened the vulnerable ecology of the region.

The camel, called the ship of the desert, was another valuable animal which played no mean part in the economy of the desert. It was the chief means of transportation and was also used in agriculture operation and war-fare. It could survive worst of droughts as it could live without water and fodder for days together.

Although the drought became part of the lives of the people of Marwar, the droughts of 1792, 1804 and 1812-13 hit them very hard. These droughts took heavy toll of men, women and children. The relief provided by the rulers was a drop in the ocean. The cattle perished in thousands throwing the desert economy wholly out of gear.

The nature had bestowed one favour on Marwar. It had quite a few salt lakes (dariba) such as Sambhar, Phalodi, Deedwana, Pachbhadra, Nawan etc. which provided employment to hundreds of people. For centuries the State exported salt to various parts of the country.

A traditional industry in the State was stone mining. The sand stone found in various parts of the State was used in building palaces,

forts and houses. The marble industry of Makarana had flourished even during the Mughal period. The famous Taj Mahal was built by Shahjahan at Agra with the marble brought from Makarana. Besides, a number of monuments and temples all over the country had been built with the marble from Makarana.

Pali had been an important centre of trade for centuries. It was situated on the route used for transporting opium from Malwa to China and several Asian countries. Nearly two thousand camels loaded with opium passed through Pali every year. Printed cloth from European countries was imported by the traders of Pali<sup>1</sup>.

Although detailed information on the import and export of goods to and from Marwar during the medieval period is not available, it appears from the list of commodities on which import and export duty was levied that the traders of Marwar were engaged in the import and export trade with the neighbouring states. The commodities imported were opium, tobacco, rice, gur, sugar, Indian and foreign cloth, dry fruits, gold, silver and other metals. The commodities exported were hydes and skins, wool, ghee, slat etc. The domesticated animals like camels, bullocks, cows and sheep were also exported on large scale<sup>2</sup>.

In the list of commodities on which the duties of customs were levied, there is no mention of wheat, jowar or bajara. We could, therefore, safely presume that food grains like jowar and bajara were not exported even when Marwar had a bumper crop. This was in accordance with the policy of various States not to permit export of food grains. The traders in each State purchased the surplus stock at cheaper rates and stored it in traditional "Khais" (bunkers) and made huge profits by selling it in times of scarcity and droughts.

Marwar had a taxation system which was, to say the least, oppressive. It had the dubious distinction of innovating such sources of taxation as had no where existed during those days as we shall see in the following paragraphs. And yet the state exchequer had always been in the red, as the State had constantly been engaged in war-fare either with the central power or with its neighbour or with its own nobility. The rulers borrowed money from Sahukars from time to time to maintain their military machine<sup>3</sup>. They also took recourse to extort money from their own officials at the pang of imprisonment or even death.

1. Dr. Padmja Sharma, *Ibid.* p. 258

2. Dr. Padmja Sharma, *Ibid.* p. 258

3. Dr. Padmja Sharma, *Ibid.* p. 227-228



Marwar was the biggest State in Rajasthan as far as area was concerned. Yet, unlike other States, the land revenue was not a major source of revenue. The reasons were simple. Firstly the State was the part of the Thar desert and received scanty and irregular rainfall. Secondly 83% of its land was held by jagirdars whose contribution to the state-exchequer was almost negligible.

In Khalsa (crown lands) the rate of land revenue ranged from one fifth to one fourth of the produce in normal times. In times of war it went upto one half. It was paid in kind<sup>1</sup>. In addition to the land revenue, the farmer had also to pay levy on his produce to the various village-functionaries like patwari, sahana, choudhari, kanawari and .olayat. The levy was known as "malwa".

There were various methods of assessment of the farmer's produce for the purpose of determination of land revenue. Important among them were lata, ankbandi, yara etc. The income from land revenue fluctuated from Rs 2.00 lakhs to Rs 5.00 lakhs per annum depending upon the rains.

The rate of the annual 'rekh' paid by the jagirdars to the ruler was Rs 8.00 per thousand of the land revenue recovered by them in their jagirs. Even then the jagirdars resented the levy. The 'peshkash' was paid by a jagirdar when he succeeded the jagir. The total annual revenue accrued to the state exchequer on account of rekh and peshkash was about Rs 3.35 lakhs, although the land revenue collected by the jagirdars exceeded Rs 50.00 lakhs<sup>2</sup>.

An important source of revenue to the State was 'sayar'. It was imposed on import, export and movement of various commodities. The rates differed from commodity to commodity. It was also levied on the sale and purchase of animal as also on carts, chariots etc. The Brahmins, Charans, Bhats, Jagirdars and Government officials were exempted from this tax. The income from this tax fluctuated from year to year depending on the monsoon as well as law and order situation in the State. For example the income from "Sayar" was Rs 4.54 lakhs in 1821 and Rs 2.89 lakhs in 1838. While there was comparative peace and good rainfall in 1821, there was confrontation between Maharaja Mansingh and the East India Company in 1838. The State also faced a severe drought in the year.

1 Dr. Padmja Sharma, *Ibid*, p. 290

2. Dr. Padmja Sharma, *Ibid*, p. 201. 202.

The salt was a major source of revenue of the State. According to Tod, the income from salt in early twenties of the nineteenth century was as much as Rs 7.5 lakhs. It however, came down to Rs 4.25 lakhs in 1837 due to uncertain conditions prevailing in the State.

As the rulers could not meet their requirements from land revenue, octroi, salt etc. they imposed lags (cess) from time to time. The lags were as many as one hundred. These lags differed from area to area and from community to community. The main lags were "Bara-barad, Faujwal, Ghar-bab, Khandi, Vasola, Dawat pooja, Tibari, Chanwari etc. The most common lag was Ghar-bab or house tax. Its rates ranged from 2 to Rs 20 per house. The annual income from these lags described as "Kachahari se-lag Rakam" was Rs 5.07 lakhs in 1821 but fell to Rs 2.12 lakhs in 1838.<sup>1</sup>

More oppressive, however, were the lags imposed by the Thakurs in their jagirs. The people of jagirs had to pay lags from birth to death. Some of the lags were Hal, Kansa, Ghooghari, Chanwari, Kharkhar, Sukharana, Kharda etc. The Thakurs also imposed 'mapa' on the movement and sale of various commodities in their respective jagirs. Besides, they forced the people to render various services (begar) to them without payment. The rates of land revenue in the jagir areas were also much higher as compared to the Khalsa area.

Barring jagirdars, mutsaddies and the small trading community the common people in the State suffered pangs of poverty. Even the Rathors, who belonged to the martial race, remained 'hand to mouth' during peace times.

### **The art and architecture.**

According to scholars, the Marwar school of paintings had its origin during the reign of Rao Maldeo (1532-1562). The paintings of this period are found in the famous Jain work, "Uttaradnyan Sootra" available in the Baroda museum. The wall paintings (murals) in the Chokhila-mahal belong to this period.

The Mughal art started influencing the Marwar school during the period of Mota Raja Udaisingh (1583-1595), when Marwar came under the suzerainty of the Mughals. The miniature paintings of the time of Raja Soorsingh (1595-1620), the paintings of Dhola-Maru and the Bhagawat clearly reflect the influence of the Mughal art. The illustrated "Ragmala" written at Pali in 1623 and the paintings based on Soor Sagar

1. Dr. Padmja Sharma. Ibid. p. 201.

and Rasik-Priya positively show the impact of the Mughal art over the Marwar school during the period of Raja Gajasingh (1620-1638).

The Mughal emperor Aurangzeb was no lover of art. A large number of families of artists, which for generations had been receiving Mughal patronage, migrated to Rajput States. Maharaja Jaswantsingh (1638-1678) invited some of them to Jodhpur. The portraits of Soorsingh, Gajasingh and Jaswantsingh and the paintings based on folk lores of Dhola-maroo and Sohan Mahiwal and those based on the poems of Keshaw and Mati Ram are the classic examples of the fusion of the two cultures in the field of art. However, the Marwar school still preserved its identity to some extent as the painting based on 'Barahmas' and 'Rag ragini' showed.

The domination of the Mughal art over the Marwar school was complete during the period of Maharaja Ajitsingh who spent the best part of his life in the service of the Mughals. Of course, the use of bright colours in the paintings in accordance with the tradition of Marwar school continued unabated. In the painting of this period, the theme was local but the style was Mughal. The paintings based on the folk-lores and folk lyrics of Dhola-maroo, Moomal-de, Nihal-de, Pabuji, Shat-ritu, Barahmas etc. were all in the Mughal style. The place of paintings based on Hindu religious scriptures like Ramayan, Mahabharat, Bhagwat etc. was taken by paintings depicting Mughal harems, fountains, turkish baths etc.

When Mansingh ascended the Marwar throne in 1803, the Mughal empire had almost disintegrated and with it started the "demughalisation" of the Marwar art. The local culture and the landscape once again found their expression in the paintings. The Rathor samant's moustache and turban and the female attire of Marwari lahanga and Odhani and the ornaments made their reappearance with all their splendour in the local paintings.

The illustrated 'Dhola-Maroo' containing 120 paintings and the Panch Tantra containing four hundred paintings were the symbols of resurgent Marwar school. Besides, a new theme in the Marwar school appeared during Mansingh's time. The Maharaja was a blind follower of the Nath sect. The illustrated "Sidh-Sidhant- Padhatti" written during this period contains artistic paintings relating to the yogic exercises of the Naths. The portraits of Nath saints found in 'Nath Charit' restored the pristine glory of the original Marwar school to a considerable extent.

A major contribution in the field of architecture by the rulers of Marwar during the medieval period was the construction of the fort of Jodhpur. It was built by Rao Jodha in 1459 on the Chidiabhakar hill, 730 feet above sea level. It has as many as eight gates some of which were constructed by the later rulers. The palace in the fort is adorned with long carved panels and latticed windows of exquisite designs in red stone. Maharaja Jaswantsingh II had added the Toran-pol, Dewan-khana and Sabha mandap in the fort. His successor Maharaja Ajitsingh built the Ajit Vilas and Fatch Mahal on the fort. The strategic importance of the fort can be realised from the fact that in the war in 1807, Maharaja Jagatsingh of Jaipur and his powerful allies failed to capture it in spite of a long siege of nearly 5 months. The fort is called Meherangarh as also Mayur-dhwaj. It is still a mystery when and why this fort was given these names. It need not be emphasized that additions made in the fort during the period of Gajsingh and thereafter carry influence of the Mughal architecture.

Maharaja Jaswantsingh II was fond of laying gardens. The Rai-ka-bag and the Kaga gardens laid during his time are really oases in the desert. Maharaja Ajitsingh built a magnificent cenetoph known as 'Deval' in the memory of his father, Jaswantsingh at Mandor. Perched on a 7 feet high plinth it is crowned with sparing spires and ornats with exquisit sculpture. A similar cenetoph was built here paradoxically by Maharaja Abhaysingh in the memory of his father Ajitsingh for whose murder he himself was responsible.

An interesting place at Mandor is the hall of "heroes" which houses sixteen gigantic figures chiseled out of one single rock. The statues are of popular Hindu deities like Chamunda, Maheshasur-mardini and the folk deities like Pabu, Ramdeo, Goga, Mallinath etc. The hall belongs to the Mughal period. Maharaja Mansingh's contribution to the architecture is the 'Mahamandir' at Jodhpur. The temple is an architectural splendour supported by 100 pillars and ornamented with detailed designs and figures depicting various postures of yoga.

The world famous Jain temple of Ranakpur is situated in Gorwar region of Pali district. The temple, known for its architectural excellence, was constructed in 1496 AD when Gorwar was part of Mewar. The details of this temple have, therefore, been given in the sub-chapter dealing with Mewar.

### **The literature**

For a State as large as Rajasthan it is not surprising that it has had many dialects such as Dhundhari, Shekhawati, Mewati, Hadoti, Mewari, Bhili, Marwari etc. And yet the Marwari, also known as "Maru-bhasha", is the richest amongst them all. In recent years attempts have been made to give Marwari the status of a state language.

According to scholars the Marwari had its origin from the Nagar-Aprabhansh in the ninth century AD and assumed literary character in the fourteenth century. It was enriched during the medieval period. In the feudal set-up of those days the Charan's through their Dingal poetry not only made significant contribution to the Marwari literature but also inspired the Rajputs to sacrifice their lives in the service of their mother land. The Jain scholars and saint-poets gave new dimension to the Marwari literature. The contribution of the common man and woman made to the Marwari dialect in the form of folk lores etc. can not also be lightly ignored. The credit should also go to the rulers of Marwar who extended their patronage to the poets and scholars. Some of the rulers themselves produced works of high literary standards in Marwari.

The literary tradition of Marwar dates back to the fifteenth century AD. Dhadhi Bahadar's *Veer-van* and Padmnabh's "*Kanha-de Prabandh*" are the products of this century. Dhadhi Bahadar, a Muslim who received the patronage of Rao Veeram Rathor, has narrated in his work in Dingal the battle of Veeram with the Johiyas<sup>1</sup>. Padmnabh, who adorned the court of Chouhan Akheraj of Jalor, composed his work in 1465 AD depicting the battles of Kanahade, an ancestor of Akheraj, against Alla-u-ddin Khilji<sup>2</sup>.

Marwar produced two eminent saint-poets in the fifteenth century in Isardas Charan and Meerabai. Incidentally both flourished outside Marwar. Isardas spent most of his life in Jamnagar where he was given jagir by the local ruler. His works included *Hari-rash*, *Bal-lila*, *Garud-puran* etc. Meerabai was the daughter of Rathor Ratan Singh of Merta. She was married to Bhojraj, son of Rana Sanga of Mewar. She became widow at an early age and took to Krishna-bhakti. She composed thousands of verses in praise of Lord Krishna. Her 'bhajans' are as popular today as they were during her life time.

1. Dr. H. I. Maheswari, *Rajasthan Bhasha Aur Sahitya*, p-74-75.

2. Dr. P. L. Manariya, *Rajasthan Sahitya Ka Itihas*, p. 59-61

In the sixteenth century the poets who made their mark in Marwar were Gadan Pasayat who composed 'Rao Ranmal-ro-Roopak' and Charan Ashanand, author of 'Umade Bhatiyani-ra-Kavit'. Ashanand received the patronage of Rao Maldeo. One of the greatest patriot-poets of the 16th century was Dursha Adha. He was born at Jaitaran in 1538 AD and died at an age of 111. Although he received patronage and recognition in the court of Akbar, he displayed his independent character as a Dingal poet and composed verses in admiration of Akbar's arch enemies like Rana Pratap of Mewar, Rao Chandrasen of Marwar and Rao Surtan of Sirohi. At times he even condemned his own patron Akbar. His works included 'Jhulana Rao Amarsinghji Gajsinghot-ra' 'Viroom Chhihattari, 'Rao Shri Surtan ra- Kavit' and 'Kirtan Bhavani'.

Dadhavadia Madhadas, who served in the court of Raja Soorsingh composed Ram-Raso and Bhasha Dasham- Skund. Soorsingh's successor Raja Gajsingh extended his patronage to a number of poets such as Hema Kavi, Gadan Keshavadas and Haridas Banawat.

Maharaja Jaswantsingh himself was a scholar and a poet of repute. His notable works are Bhashabhusan, Prabodh Chandrodaya Natak, Sidhant Sar, Geeta Mahatmya, Aparox Sidhant etc. He extended generous patronage to writers and poets. His Pradhan, Muhnot Nensi, was a noted historian. Nensi's "Muhanot Nensi-ri-Khyat" is an authentic work on the history of the rulers of Rajasthan, Gujarat and Bundelkand regions. The other scholars who received support and recognition in the court of the Maharaja were Barath Narharidas, Navin, Nidhan, Banarasidas, Dalpati Mishra and Vrind Kavi. It is a measure of tribute to Jawantsingh that in spite of his heavy involvement in the affairs of the Mughal empire, he could find time in literary pursuits of such a magnitude.

Muhnot Nensi, the Diwan of Maharaja Jaswantsingh, was not only a good administrator and an able general but also an eminent historian. His work, 'Muhnot Nensi-ki- Khyat', completed in 1665, while he was still the Diwan, is considered as the first reliable book on history of Rajasthan and other neighbouring regions. Nensi has also the distinction of writing the socio-economic history of the various parganas of Jodhpur (Marwar-ra- pargana-ri Vigat). The work is unique in that even in the seventeenth century, when the process of writing political history had just started in Rajasthan, Nensi had the vision of recording the socio-economic conditions of the people of the region.

No ruler of Jodhpur saw more ups and downs in his career than Maharaja Ajitsingh. And yet he could find time to compose poems. His collection of poems in 'Gunsar' speaks highly of his literary ability. His other works are Gaj-udhar-granth, Bhav Virhi etc. He had command over prose and poetry both. Bhatt Jagjiwan Ram, a poet of repute, adorned his court. His work, "Ajitodaya" is a biography of Ajitsingh in Sanskrit verses. It is an important source of history. A number of other poets in his court including Balkrishna Diksit, Dwarkadas, Hari Ram, etc. wrote about his achievements in the various spheres. He thus carried forward the literary tradition of his predecessors.

During the long reign of Maharaja Mansingh a new class of literature sprang up as in the case of art. A number of books about the Nath sect and its founder Jalandharnath were written. Prominent among this type of literature were 'Jalandharnathji-ro-gun' by Sewak Dolatram, 'Nath-Chandrika' by Uttamchand and 'Nath stuti' by Bankidas.

The noted Sanskrit and Dingal scholar Bankidas was the doyen of poets in Mansingh's court. His place in the court was next only to Mansingh himself. His celebrated work "Itihas Varata" finds a pride of place among the history books written during his period. The other scholars in his court were Sambhudat (Raj-Kumar- Prabodh), Visaroop (Awadhoot Gita), Bhisma Bhatt (Vivek-Martand) and Manohardas (Jasbhishan Chandrika).

Mansingh himself was a talented poet and a scholar of standing. His works Nath-Sharot, Nath-Puran, Nath-Shatak, Sidh-gyan etc. are still popular among the followers of Jalandharnath. He often invited scholars from outside and organised debates on various social and religious issues. Literature and scholars flourished in Marwar during his reign.

#### **(4) BIKANER STATE**

Bikaner was the second largest Rathore principality of Rajasthan. Its founder Rao Bika was the eldest surviving son of Rao Jodha who founded Jodhpur. As relations between Bika and his father became strained, Bika accompanied by his uncle Kandhal and a band of about six hundred followers left Marwar in September 1465 to seek greener pastures in Jangal-desh situated in the north of Marwar.

The region was occupied by Bhatias, Jats, Bhattis, Chayals, Johyias, Kayamkhanis etc. Bika advanced mile after mile in the desert tracts. He stayed at Chandasar for three years. From there he moved on

to Kodamdeshasar and proclaimed himself as ruler of the area in 1472<sup>1</sup>. He laid the foundation of a fort near Kodamdeshasar in 1485 and of the present city of Bikaner three years later.

In the north-eastern part of Jangal-desh, there were number of Jat Janpads. The Godara Jats immediately accepted the overlordship of Bika in recognition of which the Godaras were given the hereditary privilege of putting "rajtilak" on the forehead of the rulers of Bikaner at the time of their succession to the gaddi. Gradually Bika annexed 1664 villages belonging to various Jat clans. He invaded Shingana and subjugated Johyas. He captured the territory of Khichis and incorporated some villages of Kayamkhanis and Pathans in his principality.

In 1489 Bika's uncle Kandhal was killed in a battle against Sharan Khan, subedar of Hissar. On Bika's request his father, Rao Jodha, joined him in the battle against the Khan, who was killed. Bika, thus, avenged the death of his uncle. At this juncture Rao Jodha asked Bika to make over Ladnu to him. The latter carried out the wishes of his father but requested him to give him the family heir-looms to which he was entitled by virtue of his being the eldest son. Jodha promised to do so. He, however, died in April 1489 before he could fulfill the promise.

A few years later when Suja ruled over Marwar, Bika requested him to send the heirlooms as promised by his late father. Suja refused to part with them. Bika advanced towards Jodhpur with a 30,000 strong army. The encounter between the forces of Bikaner and Jodhpur took place near Jodhpur in which Suja's army was defeated. Bika besieged the fort of Jodhpur. Suja's mother intervened and handed over the heirlooms to Bika. Thus ended the family feud.

Bika died in September 1504. His eldest son, Rao Nara, succeeded him but died issueless within a few months. His younger brother, Lunkaran, ascended the throne in January 1505. He led an expedition against the chief of Dadrewa and annexed his territory after a 7 month long fight. Later he defeated the Kayamkhanis of Fatehpur and captured 120 villages. He also defeated the Chayals and brought 440 villages belonging to them under his control. In 1513 Mohammad Khan, the Sultan of Nagaur, attacked Bikaner. Lunkaran successfully repulsed the attack. He annexed Didwana, Baggad, Singhana etc. from the local Muslim rulers. He was killed in the battle against the Nawab of Narnol in June 1526 at Dhosi.

<sup>1</sup> Shyamal Das, *Ibid*, Vo II page 478.



Jaitsi succeeded his father Lunkaran at a time when Babur had established the Mughal dynasty. Babur died in 1530 and his son Humayon succeeded him. In 1538 Humayon's brother Kamran attacked Bhatner (Hanumangarh) and captured it. He advanced further and surrounded the fort of Bikaner. Rao Jaitsi shifted to Deshnok from where he launched a night attack on the Mughal army and defeated it. In 1541 Rao Maldeo of Jodhpur attacked Bikaner. In the battle which took place in February 1542 Jaitsi was killed. Maldeo occupied Bikaner. Jaitsi was succeeded by his son Rao Kalyanmal. In the meanwhile Humayon lost his throne to Sher Shah Suri. Humayon came to Phalodi to seek help of Rao Maldeo. When Shershah came to know about it he marched on Jodhpur in January 1544. Rao Kalyanmal, who was waiting for an appropriate opportunity at Sirsa, joined Shershah's forces at Merta. Shershah defeated Maldeo and captured Jodhpur. He restored Bikaner to Rao Kalyanmal. This was the first link established between Bikaner and a central power at Delhi.

Shershah died in May 1545 in the battle of Kalinjar. His successors were too weak to retain Delhi. Humayon regained his throne in 1555 but died soon thereafter. His son Akbar became emperor in 1556. Akbar reestablished the Mughal supremacy in the country. Kalyanmal met Akbar at Nagaur in 1570 and became his mansabdar. He died in 1574.

Raisingh succeeded his father Kalyanmal and assumed the title of Maharaja. He participated in a number of Mughal campaigns in various parts of the country and earned the confidence of Akbar. He was granted Nagaur and several other parganas. In 1605 Akbar died and his son Jahangir succeeded him. Raisingh died in January 1612 at Burhanpur where he was working as subedar of Deccan.

Raisingh's younger brother, Prithviraj, also served the Mughal court. He participated in the Mughal expedition in Kabul for which he was rewarded the fief of Gagron. A story is prevalent that when Rana Pratap sent a message of "surrender" to Akbar, it was on the advice of Prithviraj that Pratap changed his mind. It appears to be a cock and bull story. Serving the Mughals as faithful courtier, it was impossible for Prithviraj to have instigated Pratap not to bow before the Mughal emperor.

On Raisingh's death in the Deccan, his eldest son Dalpat ascended the throne contrary to the wishes of his late father. His younger brother,

Soorsingh, submitted his claim to the gaddi of Bikaner in the light of the last wishes of his father. The emperor, however, recognized Dalpat as ruler of Bikaner.

In August 1612 the emperor ordered Dalpat to proceed to Thatta under Mirza Rustam. But Dalpat did not comply with the emperor's wishes. He thus incurred the displeasure of the emperor. Soorsingh made full use of the opportunity. Using the good offices of Raja Mansingh of Amber, he succeeded in getting the imperial farman for occupying Bikaner. The emperor despatched an army to dispossess Dalpat. The latter lost the battle and was imprisoned. He was later on killed at Ajmer while in jail.

Soorsingh ascended the throne in 1613. The first thing he did was to eliminate the family of late Karamchand Bachhawat, a former minister of Bikaner State. The only surviving member of family was a male child who was at Udaipur at the time of massacre of Bachhawat family which included men, women, and children. There was a charge against Karamchand that he was a party to the conspiracy hatched by Dalpat who wanted to overthrow his father Raisingh. Soorsingh served the Mughal emperor Jahangir loyally. The major assignment given to him by the emperor was to suppress the revolt of prince Khurram in the Deccan in 1622. Soorsingh crushed the resistance of Khurram and restored the supremacy of the emperor in the region.

In 1627 Jahangir conferred the pargana of Nagaur upon Soorsingh for his loyal services to the empire. The same year Jahangir died. Prince Khurram succeeded him with the title of Shahjahan. The new emperor raised the mansab of Soorsingh to 4000. It seems that Shahjahan was large hearted in that he preferred to forget that Soorsingh had fought quite a few battles against him in the south when he raised the standard of revolt against his father Jahangir. Soorsingh died in Burhanpur in September 1631 while in the service of the emperor.

Karansingh, the eldest son of Soorsingh, ascended the throne. In 1632 he joined a Mughal expedition led by Wazir Khan against Fatehkhani in the Deccan. Fatehkhani surrendered. In 1648 he was appointed as kiledar of Daulatabad. Karansingh remained neutral in the war of succession amongst the sons of Shahjahan. He returned to Bikaner from his posting in Deccan. His two sons, however, fought on the side of Aurangzeb who finally won the war and became emperor. He wanted to teach Karansingh a lesson but eventually pardoned him in view of the

services rendered by his sons. In 1666 Aurangzeb deputed Karansingh on an expedition against Jalal Khan, the jamindar of Chanda. He committed some "indiscretion" at Attack<sup>1</sup> in 1667. Aurangzeb forfeited his mansab and removed him as ruler of Bikaner. He was despatched to Aurangabad where he breathed his last in 1669.

The emperor put Anupsingh, the eldest son of Karansingh, on the throne in July 1667. In 1670 he sent Anupsingh to Deccan in the expedition led by Mahabat Khan against Shivaji. In the battle of Bijapur in 1673, the Mughal army defeated the combined forces of the Marahatas and Hyderabad as a result of which Anupsingh was conferred the title of Maharaja<sup>2</sup>. In 1678 Anupsingh was appointed Hakim of Aduni in the south. While he was there, the Bhatís of Kharbara and Raimalwáli in Bikaner rebelled.

In 1682 Banmali, a half brother of Anupsingh, claimed half of Bikaner State on the basis of a farman issued by the Mughal emperor. Anupsingh got him murdered by administering poison in a well planned manner. He convinced the emperor through a Nawab, who was bribed by him, that Banmali had died a natural death. In 1687 Aurangzeb raised the mansab of Anupsingh to 3500 in recognition of the part played by him in the battle of Golkunda. Anupsingh died in 1698 at Aduni.

Swaroopsingh succeeded his father Anupsingh at an age of 9. He died two years later at Aduni. His ten year old brother Sujansingh succeeded him. Aurangzeb summoned him to the Deccan. Sujansingh remained in the south for about ten years. With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707, the Mughal empire started tottering. Sujansingh now paid attention to the defence of his State. In 1733 the Jodhpur forces attacked Bikaner but had eventually to withdraw in February 1734. Srijansingh died at Raisinghnagar in December 1735.

Jorawarsingh, son of Sujansingh, ascended the throne at the age of 33. Jodhpur forces again attacked Bikaner but had to come to terms with Jorawarsingh after paying a sum of Rs. 2 lacs as war damages. Abhaysingh of Jodhpur made still another attempt to capture Bikaner in 1740. Jorawarsingh with the help of Maharaja S. Jaisingh of Jaipur defeated the Jodhpur army. He died in May 1746 while returning from his Hissar expedition where he had gone to suppress the Bhattis and Johiyas.

1. Karansingh, 'The Relations of the House of Bikaner with the Central Powers,' p.83

2. Dayaldas-ki-Khyat, Vol.II. p. 205

Jorawarsingh had no issue. His cousin Gajsingh succeeded him. Bakhatsingh, brother of Maharaja Abhaysingh of Jodhpur, sought Gajsingh's help to capture Jodhpur. Gajsingh joined Bakhatsingh and defeated Maharaja Ramsingh, son of the late Abhaysingh, near Merta in 1750. Bakhatsingh thus became the ruler of Jodhpur. On the request of the Mughal emperor Ahmadshah, Gajsingh sent his army to Delhi to rescue him from his Vazir, Mansoor Ali Khan of Safadarganj. The emperor was so pleased with Gajsingh, that he granted him a mansab of 7000 jat and 5000 horse. He was also given the title of "Raj Rajeshwar Maharaja Dhiraj". For years Gajsingh had to remain engaged in suppressing the rebellious activities of Bhattis, Johiyas and Daoudputras (Bhawalpuris). He died in March 1787.

Rajsingh succeeded his father Gajsingh at the age of 42. He was poisoned to death by his brother<sup>1</sup> within a month. His 6 year old son Pratapsingh succeeded him. The latter was strangled to death by his uncle Suratsingh within a few months. Suratsingh succeeded him in October 1787. A number of samants of Bikaner rebelled against him. He crushed them with a heavy hand. In 1799 a mercenary, George Thomas, attacked Bikaner. Suratsingh, however, defeated him with the help of Maharaja of Patiala. In 1804 Suratsingh captured Bhatner from Bhattis and changed its name to Hanumangarh. In 1807 he captured Phalodi from Marwar. He participated in the battle of Gigoli on behalf of Dhunkalsingh against Maharaja Mansingh of Jodhpur. Mansingh was defeated and fled to Jodhpur. After sometime Mansingh attacked Bikaner as a result of which Suratsingh had to return Phalodi to Jodhpur. He had also to pay Rs. 3 lakhs to Mansingh as war damages.

In 1814 Suratsingh sent an expedition under his Faujbaxi Amarchand Surana against the Thakur of Churu. Surana captured Churu. The Maharaja conferred on him the title of "Rao" in recognition of his services. It raised the eye-bros of the samants who got him murdered. In 1816 the Pindari leader, Jamir Khan, ravaged Bikaner. The Bhattis and Johiyas also raised their heads. The samants too started asserting their autonomy. The Rathor principality was thus in a state of chaos. At this time the East India Company had started bringing the Rajasthan States under its control. Suratsingh also signed the treaty of subsidiary alliance in March 1818 with Charles Matcalf who represented the East India Company. The Company now undertook to protect the principality against external attack and internal revolt.

1. Col Tod, AAR, Vol. II p.1938

### **Vishnoi community**

When the Rathor State of Bikaner was still in its formative stage, a new community known as "Vishnoi" emerged in 1485 AD. A male child, Jambhoji, was born in a family of Panwar Rajputs in 1451 AD at Pipasar. His father's name was Lohat and that of his mother Hansa, who was from a Bhati family of Chhapar. The Lohats were a well to do family of cattle grazers. Jambhoji's childhood appeared to be dull. His expression was poor and his diet was negligible. The parents were therefore, worried about the future of their only son. They took him to a "tantrik" and told him that if he could cure him, they would reward him with a cow. The tantrik, however, failed. It is said that on this occasion Jambhoji uttered his first "Sabad" in which he explained the importance of a teacher in one's life.

Jambhoji started grazing cows at the age of 7. He served as a cowboy for 27 years. During this period he blessed Rao Duda of Merta who had lost his principality to some Muslim ruler. After sometime, Duda recovered his jagir as predicted by Jumbhoji. He gave Rao Jodha, who founded Jodhpur, the "Berisal nagara"<sup>1</sup> a symbol of luck in 1469. This nagara was brought from Jodhpur to Bikaner by Bika, the founder of Bikaner. The nagara is still preserved in the Junagarh fort.

Jambhoji remained bachelor all his life. In 1483 both the parents of Jambhoji died within a period of five months. Jambhoji gave up all his property and took to sanyas in the very year and started living on a big sand dune at Sambharathal near Pipasar. In 1485 Bikaner (Jangaladesh) was in the midst of an acute famine. Jambhoji helped the people of the area and saved them and their cattle-wealth from hunger. He became popular among the people for rendering timely help during this critical period. On Karthik Krishna 8, 1542 V.S. (1485 A.D) he established the Vishnoi sect and inducted his own uncle, Pooloji, in the new sect as his first disciple. The followers of the sect worshiped God Vishnu and it is why the sect was called "Vishnoi". The sect, however, did not believe in idol- worship.

Jambhoji laid down 29 tenets which included leading a simple life, taking vegetable diet, avoiding all intoxicants like liquor, opium and tobacco, treating animals humanely and above all protecting the green Khejdi and other trees. The followers of the Vishnoi sect consisted mainly of Jats, Rajputs and Scheduled castes. There were, of course, some Muslim followers too.

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1. A giant size musical instrument.

Jambhoji died in 1536 A.D. at Sambharathal. The followers wanted to bury Jambhoji's body at Jambhola but Rao Jetsingh of Bikaner did not permit it. They, therefore, buried him at a place known as 'Mukam' near Talwa. Later on they built a temple at Mukam. They hold a fair here every year in the memory of their 'lord'.

During his life time the saint had met Sultan Sikander Lodi of Delhi, Nawabs of Karnataka and Multan, Rawal Jetsingh of Jaisalmer, Rana Sanga of Mewar and Rao Lunkaran of Bikaner and blessed them. The saint was so much concerned about preservation of green trees that he used to say : "Sir santay rukh rahe to bhee sasta jan". The words mean that even if one sacrifices his life for saving a single tree, the proposition would still be cheaper. The followers of Jambhoji i.e. the Vishnois, literally translated his philosophy into action in 1730. As many as 363 men, women and children laid down their lives in protecting trees at a village, Khejadli, when Maharaja Abhaysingh of Jodhpur had ordered the cutting of trees for making lime needed for construction of his palace. The Maharaja was so much upset because of loss of human lives in the cause of environment that he strictly prohibited felling of green trees all over Marwar. Jambhoji was thus a harbinger of the environmental movement in an age when no body in the world had even thought of it.

The Vishnoi sect gradually became a community by itself. They bury their dead. They follow the sermons contained in the 'Sabadvani' of Jambhoji. At the moment the Vishnois are predominantly found in Marwar though they have pockets in other parts of Rajasthan and Haryana, Punjab and U.P. Their number is stated to be about two lakhs. They celebrate practically all the Hindu festivals except Holi. The Vishnois observe 'Jambheshari Samvat' from the date of the death of Jambhoji in 1536. They are not only good farmers and cattle breeders but are also shrewd businessmen. Their temples are located at Mukam, Rurkali, Misar, Jangloo, Jambhola and Samelia in Rajasthan, Hissar in Haryana and Tiba in Punjab.

### **Administrative set up**

The administration in Bikaner could not escape the influence of the Mughal system. At the head was the Diwan to aid and advise the ruler. In the districts the 'chiryat' was the local head whose function was to collect revenue. He was assisted by kanungos and patwaris in the discharge of his duties.

Like other princely States, Bikaner too had a number of Jagirdars. They were practically autonomous during the Mughal period. The jagirs were hereditary but liable to be confiscated by the ruler. The Jagirdars paid practically no tax to the State but they fought along with their men on the side of the ruler whenever called upon to do so.

### **Art and culture**

The region constituting the former princely State of Bikaner was the cradle of the Indus Valley Civilisation. The archaeological excavations in the sixties at Kalibangan in Ganganagar district have confirmed that a civilisation had existed in the region even before the advent of the Harappa culture. The mighty river Saraswati, described as mother of the rivers in the Rigveda, once traversed the region which later on buried into the great Thar desert due to some geomorphological upheaval. The region was occupied by Bhatis, Jats, Bhattis, Chayals, Johiyas and Kayamkhanis, when Bika brought their Janpads under his control and established the second Rathor dynasty in Rajasthan in the last quarter of the fifteenth century A.D.

In view of the topography, physical features and climate the Bikaner State seldom faced aggression from the sultans of Delhi. But, the constant threat from Jodhpur coupled with internal anarchy compelled the ruler of Bikaner to seek the Mughal umbrella in 1570 A.D. The Mughal suzerainty brought stability to the State. It, however, affected its art and culture to a considerable extent.

In the field of architecture, the Mughal influence is clearly visible in the Junagarh fort built by Maharaja Raisingh in 1594 at Bikaner. It reflects the architectural beauty of Fatehpur Sikari and the Red Fort of Delhi. The Soor Mandir constructed by Maharaja Soorsingh (1612-31) and Karnimata's temple at Deshnok represent the architecture of Akbar's time. The Chhatari of Maharaja Karansingh (1631-49) at Devikund Sagar is another monument built in the Fatehpur-Sikari style<sup>1</sup>.

The Bikaner school of art came into being in the sixteenth century according to Dr. Jaisingh Neeraj<sup>2</sup>. The earlier paintings of this school were influenced by the Jain school and specially by the yatis of the Matheran family. The Ustas brought from Delhi during the Mughal period introduced the fine work of the Mughal school.

1. Karnisingh- *The Relation of the House of Bikaner with the Central Powers*. p. 117

2. Neeraj and Sharma - *Rajasthan-ki-Sanskritik Parampara* p.89.

Cultural and literary activities in the State got a great philip during the reign of Raja Raisingh (1574-1612). Scores of poets flocked to his court and composed poems in his praise. A number of scholars wrote commentaries on several Sanskrit texts. 'Raisingh Mahotsava' in Sanskrit and 'Balbodhini' in Hindi were written during his reign. Raisingh's brother Prithviraj was also a poet of standing. His poem 'Vel Krishna-Rukamani-ri' is considered an important work of his time. He became famous for composing inspiring couplets in Deengal exhorting Rana Pratap to maintain his independence and not to bow before Akbar.

Anup Singh (1669-1698) was a great patron of art and literature. He carried out golden per work on the walls of Anup Mahal in the Bikaner fort. It is an exquisite piece of work. During his reign the Ustas produced several miniature paintings based on stories and poems prevalent in the region. He built the famous Anup Sanskrit library with nearly ten thousand manuscripts and rare works. He introduced Chopar Satranj and Chess in Bikaner.

### **Trade and Commerce**

A major part of Bikaner State was barren and sparsely populated. There were no rivers. The average rainfall was between 18 to 26 cms. The State often faced droughts when the people along with their cattle had to migrate to the neighbouring States. And yet the State had attained commercial importance in the Mughal period due to its location. The capital town of Bikaner was situated on the trade route from Kabul to India. The travellers and caravans passed through it. Rajgath was an important commercial mart and a point of rendezvous for caravans from various parts of northern India. From here there were several main routes, one to Delhi via Hissar, another to Bikaner, still another to Phalodi, Nagaur, Jodhpur and Pali and the fourth to Bhawalpur (now in Pakistan) via Pugal. While the State exported animals, wool and ghee, it imported wheat, rice, spices, coconuts etc.

During the last phase of Mughal empire the law and order situation in the State deteriorated and affected its trade and commerce. There was always a risk of the caravans being looted by the bandits and decoit gangs. Certain business houses in the State introduced insurance of the goods in transit. The rate of premium depended on the cost of the goods and the distance for which the goods were covered. The insurance



firms also insured goods exported to the foreign countries like China<sup>1</sup>. The rates of premium in respect of foreign trade were settled mutually in each case. For example a party from Churu despatched opium to China. The premium was charged at 2.5% of the cost of the opium<sup>2</sup>. The system worked well and ensured movement of goods.

### **(5) KISHANGARH**

The founder of the tiny State of Kishangarh in the heart of Rajasthan was Kishansingh, the eighth son of Mota Raja Udaisingh of the Rathor dynasty of Marwar. Kishansingh joined the Mughal court at an early age. The emperor, Jahangir, granted him the jagir of Setholav. In 1609 he founded the town of Kishangarh and made it his capital. Jahangir conferred on him the title of 'Maharaja' and made him a mansabdar. He was killed in 1615 at Ajmer at the hands of the men of Diwan Govinddas of Jodhpur.

Kishansingh's successors Seshmal and Jagmalsingh both died at Jafarabad in the south while in the service of the Mughals. Harisingh succeeded Jagmalsingh. He died in 1644 without any issue. His nephew Roopsingh ascended the Kishangarh throne. He participated in the Mughal campaigns in the north-west frontier and Chittor. He founded the town of Roopnagar and shifted his Capital from Kishangarh to Roopnagar. He died in 1658.

Roopsingh was succeeded by his son Mansingh. Aurangzeb, the new emperor, had heard about the beauty of Charumati, the sister of Mansingh. He expressed his desire to Mansingh to marry Charumati. Poor Mansingh hardly had the courage to say 'no' to the emperor. When Charumati heard about the intentions of the emperor, she addressed a letter to Maharana Rajsingh of Mewar inviting him to come to Kishangarh and marry her. Rajsingh rushed with his forces to Kishangarh and married Charumati. Mansingh appeased Aurangzeb by marrying his younger sister to Mauzam, the eldest son of the emperor.

Mansingh died in 1706 and was succeeded by his son Rajsingh. The latter fought in the war of succession on the side of Mauzam who won the war and ascended the Mughal throne in the name of Bahadurshah. The new emperor granted Rajsingh the jagir of Sarwar and Maipura and a mansab of 7000. Rajsingh died in 1748.

1. Govind Agarwal 'Samridh Bhartiya Bima Padhati' 1988. p.29

2. Govind Agarwal. Ibid. p. 76.

While Savantsingh, the elder son of Rajsingh, was at Delhi his younger brother Bahadursingh usurped the throne of Kishangarh. The process of disintegration of the Mughal empire had started by now. Finding the emperor helpless, Savantsingh went away to Vrindavan and took to Krishna-bhakti. It was after eight years that his son Sardarsingh invaded the State with the help of the Marahatas. The two brothers now reached a settlement. While Bahadursingh retained Kishangarh, Roopnagar went to Sardarsingh.

Sardarsingh died in 1767 without a male heir. Biradsingh, son of Bahadursingh, succeeded him as ruler of Roopnagar. Meanwhile Bahadursingh also died in 1781. Biradsingh succeeded him also. Roopnagar and Kishangarh were thus united again into a composite state of Kishangarh. Biradsingh spent most of his time in Vrindavan where he died in 1788. Pratapsingh son of Biradsingh, succeeded him. He ruled the State for nine years and died in 1797. On his death his three year old son Kalyansingh ascended the throne. By now the Mughal empire had disintegrated and the East India Company had established its sway over several parts of the country. The Maharaja entered into an alliance with the Company in 1817 and accepted the British suzerainty over his State.

### **Art and Literature**

There is not much to write about the socio-economic aspects of the small principality of Kishangarh which was only 1340 sq. kms. in area. It, however, made history in the field of painting. The miniature painting made great strides in Rajasthan during the eighteenth century. A vast number of paintings were produced not only in the States but also in the thikanas. The result was that there was a decline in the quality of paintings. Kishangarh was, however, an exception. In a short span of three decades between 1735 and 1770, it produced works of outstanding beauty. The inspiration behind this artistic activity came from the romantic and devotional poet, prince Savantsingh, also known as Nagridas. Needless to state that the Kishangarh school was as much influenced by the Mughal school of paintings as the Marwar school or the Jaipur school.

Savantsingh fell in love with a beautiful singer known as Bani Thani (the bewitching lady of fashion). As stated earlier, on his father's death in 1748 his younger brother Bahadursingh had usurped the throne. Savantsingh along with his beloved went away to Vrindavan and took to Krishna-bhakti. He translated his love for Bani Thani into the romance

of Krishna and Radha. The famous painter Nihalchand of the Kishangarh court portrayed Savantsingh as Krishna and Bani Thani as Radha. These portraits became the most eloquent characteristic of the Kishangarh School of painting. In the words of Karl Khandalawala, 'to find miniatures of such outstanding beauty as the Kishangarh masterpieces, painted during the period 1735 to 1748 and even for some years thereafter, is a unique phenomena in the history of Rajasthan art'. Some of the other paintings of Nihalchand known as 'A courtly paradise', 'Tambula seva', 'The boat of love' and 'Pavilion in the grove' have been acclaimed as fine examples of the Rajasthan art. The tradition of Nihalchand was subsequently carried on by the painters of this school. The paintings of Geet Govinda belong to the period of Maharaja Kalyansingh (1798-1838). The Kishangarh school is unique in expressing female face based on Bani Thani. The combination of narrow elongated face, the pointed chin, the sharp nose, the curved eyes, and arched eye-brows are quite distinct from any other female facial type in Rajasthani painting.

Savantsingh, alias Nagridas, composed as many as 75 poems in Brij dialect. He was a follower of Nimbark sect of Vaishnavas. His work "Nagar Samuchaya" is considered as a master piece in Brij poetry. His beloved Bani Thani also composed 100 verses on Krishna-bhakti. His sister, Brijkunvari, translated Srimad Bhagvat in Brij. Brijkunvari's daughter, Sundarkunvari, was a well known poetess.

## (6) AMBER / JAIPUR

### Early Kachhavas

Very little is known about the successors of Pajvan Kachhava till we come to Rajdeo who made Amber his capital. Rajdeo's son and successor Kilahan had served Maharana Kumbha of Mewar. Earlier Kumbha had swept the Kachhava territory and extracted tribute from Amber<sup>1</sup>. Almost a century later Kachhava Prithviraj appeared on the scene. He married Rana Sanga's sister<sup>2</sup> and fought on his side against Babur at the historic battle of Khanawa in 1527 AD. When Rana Sanga was struck by an arrow on his head and fell unconscious in the battle field, it was Prithviraj who took him to Basawa, now in Jaipur district<sup>3</sup>.

1. Jadunath Sarkar — A History of Jaipur p. 31.

2. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod Part-II. 1273.

3. R.V. Somani History of Mewar I, p. 173-74.

Prithviraj died in November 1527. His fourth son Sanga founded the town of Sanganer<sup>1</sup>.

Prithviraj's sons and successors Pooranmal and Bhimsingh did not survive for long. Ratansingh, who succeeded Bhimsingh, ruled for eleven years. He was killed by his step brother Ashkaran in 1548 AD. Ashkaran ruled over Amber for sixteen days only. He was deposed by the local samants. Bharmal<sup>2</sup>, who became chief of Sanganer after the death of his elder brother Sanga, succeeded Ashkaran as ruler of Amber. In 1562 Akbar marched towards Rajasthan. A harassed Bharmal met Akbar at Sanganer and accepted his overlordship. He also married his daughter Harka to the emperor<sup>3</sup>. In return Akbar conferred on him a suitable mansab. Bharmal thus earned the dubious distinction of being the first Rajput ruler to submit to the Mughals as also to give his daughter to Akbar. He participated in Akbar's campaigns of Chittor and Ranthambhor before he died in January 1574.

Bhagwantdas succeeded his father Bharmal. The emperor confirmed him in his jagir and also granted him the same mansab as was enjoyed by Bharmal. Bhagwantdas further cemented his relations with the House of Mughals by marrying his daughter Manbhawati to prince Salim (Jahangir). He died in Lahore in 1589. His son Mansingh, who had already made his name in the Mughal court, succeeded him at an age of 39.

### **Kachhava's influence**

Mansingh's buwa (aunt) as well as his sister were in the Mughal harem. He, therefore, commanded lot of influence in the Mughal court. He had participated in several Mughal expeditions even during the life time of his father and grand father. In 1573 he went to Udaipur at the instance of Akbar to impress upon Maharana Pratap to accept the Mughal suzerainty. He did not, however, succeed in his mission.

In 1576 when Akbar finally decided to use force against Pratap, he entrusted the task to Mansingh. The Amber prince defeated the Maharana at the famous battle of Haldighati and occupied Gogunda but

1. Shyamaldas Ibid. p. 1275.

2. Bharmal has been referred to as Biharimal in some history books.

3. According to Sarkar, the Rajput girls, who entered the royal harem, became Muslims and were buried in Muslim cemeteries (A History of Jaipur, p 38, 1984)

could proceed no further because of the 'hit and run' tactics adopted by the Maharana's men. Akbar was annoyed with Mansingh for his failure to capture Pratap alive or dead and forbade his entry into the court for some months. Incidentally Akbar himself led a number of expeditions against Pratap in the next ten years but he too failed and suspended the campaign until Pratap's death in 1597.

In 1585 Mansingh was appointed as subedar of Kabul. He was, however, recalled from there because of complaints against him and was despatched to Bihar in 1587 along with his father Raja Bhagwantdas<sup>1</sup>. In 1589 Bhagwantdas died. Mansingh succeeded him as ruler of Amber. Soon thereafter he quelled the disturbances in Bihar. In 1592 he captured Orissa and humbled the rulers of Bengal and Cooch Bihar in the next two years. He brought the famous idol of Shiladevi from a Kayasth ruler of Bengal and installed it at Amber. He remained subedar of Bengal till Akbar's death in 1605. Akbar had raised his mansab to 7000 *jat* and 6000 horse for his services to the empire<sup>2</sup>.

On Akbar's death Mansingh had sided with his nephew, prince Khushro, in the matter of succession to the Mughal throne. In spite of this, the new emperor Jahangir posted him as subedar of Bengal. He was, however, soon recalled to Delhi. In 1607 he had to proceed to south to assist Khankhana in the Mughal campaign. He breathed his last there on July 17, 1614 at an age of 64. Some sixty women committed sati on his pyre.

Mansingh spent practically his whole life in the service of the Mughals. He became one of the grandees of the Mughal court not merely on the basis of his royal connections but also because of his qualities of leadership and fighting abilities. It seems that the Mughal emperors were sceptical of his capacity of mischief and it was why he was always posted far away from Delhi or Amber. His contribution to the consolidation of the Mughal empire was substantial, though he did precious little for his own principality. He was more a Mughal 'sipahsalar' than the ruler of Amber.

Raja Mansingh had more than 1500 women in his harem and each one of them gave birth to two or three sons but except Bhaosingh none of them survived<sup>3</sup>. His eldest son Jagat Singh had died in 1600 while on his way to Bengal leaving behind his son Mahasingh.

1. Shyamaldas, *Ibid.* p. 1280

2. Shyamaldas *Ibid.* p. 1282

3. Shyamaldas *Ibid.* p. 1289

Being the son of the eldest deceased son of Mansing, Mahasingh was entitled to the Amber throne according to the well established Rajput traditions. Jahangir, however, put Bhaosingh, the only surviving son of Mansingh, on the throne. Bhaosingh was a drunkard and died heirless in Deccan in December 1621.

Jaisingh I, son of Mahasingh, succeeded Bhaosingh at the age of 26. He served two emperors Jahangir and Shahjahan faithfully. He fought a number of battles in the south and came in to lime light when he unfurled the Mughal flag on Deogarh fort in March 1637. Shahjahan raised his mansab and gave him the jagir of Chaksu<sup>1</sup>. In 1639 the emperor conferred on him the title of 'Mirza Raja'.

In 1657 Shahjahan fell ill. Jaisingh sided with Dara in the war of succession amongst the emperor's sons. In July 1658, however, he crossed over to Aurangzeb, when he found that the pendulum in the war had swung in favour of Aurangzeb. On his advice quite a few Rajput rulers including Maharaja Jaswant Singh of Jodhpur also joined the band-wagon of Aurangzeb.

### **Amer's decline**

In 1665 Aurangzeb sent an expedition against the Marahata ruler Shivaji under the command of Mirza Raja Jaisingh and Diler Khan. Shivaji was defeated. He surrendered 23 out of 35 forts to the Mughal army and sent his eight year old son Sambha to the Mughal court. On Mirza Raja's persuasion Shivaji went to Delhi to pay his obeisance to the emperor in March 1666. Shivaji found the behaviour of the emperor insulting and quietly escaped to south. Aurangzeb held Mirza Raja's son Ram Singh responsible for Shivaji's escape and barred his entry into the Mughal court<sup>2</sup>. Mirza Raja himself was sent to Burhanpur, where he was poisoned to death on September 8, 1667 at the instance of the emperor<sup>3</sup>. The Kachhavas of Amber thus fell from grace in the eyes of Aurangzeb. Mirza Raja Jaisingh's successors Ram Singh I and Vishnu Singh served the empire but commanded little respect in the Mughal court.

On the death of Vishnu Singh in December, 1699 at Kohat, his 12 year son Jaisingh II ascended the Amber throne. In April 1700 Jaisingh was asked by the emperor to proceed to south to join the campaign against

1. Shyamaldas, Ibid 1289

2. Shyamaldas, Ibid 1293

3. Shyamaldas, Ibid 1295-96

the Marahatas. It was with great reluctance that Jaisingh left for south. The emperor was annoyed with Jaisingh for the delay in complying with the royal orders. He dismissed the Amber Vakil from his court and reduced Jaisingh's mansab.

The death of Aurangzeb in February 1707 was followed by a war of succession amongst his sons. Jaisingh threw his lot with Azam. His brother Vijaysingh supported Mauzam. In the midst of the battle which took place between Azam and Mauzam at Jajav near Agra on June 8 1707, Jaisingh sensed that Azam was losing. He covered his head with a piece of cloth and crossed over to Mauzam at a crucial stage of the battle. Interestingly some 50 years back his ancestor Mirze Raja Jaisingh had also crossed over from Dara to Aurangzeb in similar circumstances. Be that as it may, Mauzam won the battle decisively and declared himself as emperor in the name of Bahadurshah. He adopted the policy of reconciliation against Azam's supporters. He, however, made an exception in the case of Jaisingh, perhaps because of his brother Vijaysingh. Bahadurshah occupied Amber and named it Mominabad.

Jodhpur had been under the direct rule of the Mughals since 1679 but the young Maharaja Ajitsingh occupied it during the transition from Aurangzeb to Bahadurshah. The latter, however, reoccupied it soon. Thus like Jaisingh, Ajitsingh too became a refugee. Both of them along with Durgadas met Bahadurshah at Ajmer and requested him to return their respective 'watans' to them. The emperor took them with him on his way to south to deal with the revolt of his brother Kambaksh. When the two princes found that Bahadurshah had no intention to oblige them, they quietly left the Mughal camp along with Durgadas and came to Udaipur. Maharana Amarsingh II, who was already in touch with them received them warmly. During their stay at Udaipur, Chandra Kumari, the daughter of Amarsingh, was married to Jaisingh on certain conditions including the one that the son born to the Udaipur princess would be the heir apparent to the Amber throne notwithstanding his seniority. Ajitsingh also engaged his daughter to Jaisingh. The three leading ruling houses of Rajasthan were thus united by matrimonial alliances.

The Maharana tried to persuade Bahadurshah for the restoration of Jodhpur and Amber to their rightful claimants. When his efforts did not yield fruits, the three rulers decided that the two States should be taken possession of by use of force while the emperor was still in the south. With the help of Mewar army, Jodhpur and Amber were occupied and the two Maharajas were reinstalled on their respective ancestral

thrones in July 1708. In October the two rulers occupied Sambhar. The emperor formally confirmed them in their jagirs in June 1710 through the mediatory efforts of Maharana Amarsingh<sup>1</sup>. On December 10, Maharana Amarsingh died. His death was a grievous loss not only to Mewar but also to Jodhpur and Amber. He saved the two states from being incorporated in the Mughal empire<sup>2</sup> and served as a deterrent against Mughal ambitions in Rajasthan.

With the recognition of Jaisingh as ruler of Amber by the Mughal emperor, Vijaysingh, who had sided with Bahadurshah in the war of succession, lost all hopes of getting Amber. He left the emperor's camp and came to Hindon. In a letter to Jaisingh he expressed his desire to return to Amber. Jaisingh replied that he would be happy to welcome him. When, however, Vijaysingh met Jaisingh at Sanganer in May 1713, he was arrested and put behind bars in Jaigarh fort. He was killed by Jaisingh in 1729, when it was reported to him that he was conspiring with Rao Budhsingh of Bundi to instal himself on the Amber throne.

On Farrukhsiyar's succession to the Mughal throne in December 1712, the Saiyad brothers, Abdulla Khan and Hussain Ali, emerged as strong men of the Mughal court. In July 1713 the emperor conferred on Jaisingh the title of 'Sawai'. In October he made him subedar of Malwa. Jaisingh crushed lawless elements in the province with a heavy hand. In May 1715 he defeated a Marahata contingent which was advancing towards Ujjain. In June 1715 he returned to Delhi on being summoned by Farrukhaiyar.

In September 1710, the emperor sent an expedition against Chudaman Jat (Bharatpur) under Jaisingh. The latter captured Kaman and laid a siege to the Thun fort. Chudaman negotiated peace with the emperor through Abdulla Khan ignoring Jaisingh. The emperor also replaced Jaisingh by Ameen Khan as subedar of Malwa. This was all due to the machination of Saiyad Abdulla Khan. Pressurised by the Saiyads the emperor instructed Jaisingh to leave Delhi. Jaisingh did so much against his own wishes.

In February 1719, the Saiyadas and their supporters deposed Farrukhsiyar and put Rafi-U-ddarjat on the throne. With the Saiyads in the ring side seat, the position of Jaisingh became further precarious. Jaisingh decided to organise a front against Saiyads but failed. Soon

1. V.S. Bhatnagar, S.Jaisingh, p.52

2. V.S. Bhatnagar, Ibid. p. 140



Rafi-U-ddarjat abdicated in favour of his brother Rafi-U-ddlela who died in May 1719. The Saiyads now put prince Roshan Akhtar on the throne who assumed the name of Muhammad Shah.

The new emperor marched towards Amber to punish Jai Singh. Maharaja Ajit Singh, however, intervened. The emperor allowed Jaisingh to retain Amber but appointed him as Faujdar of Sorath. Jaisingh now carried out his promise to marry Ajitsingh's daughter, Sooraj Kanwar, who had been engaged to him as far back as 1708.

### **Jaisingh's rise**

Meanwhile the equations at the Mughal court changed. The emperor decided to get rid of the all powerful Saiyad brothers. Saiyad Hussain Ali was murdered on September 8, 1719 while on his way to south. Abdulla Khan was defeated by the forces loyal to Mohammadshah in November and was imprisoned. The elimination of Saiyad brothers from the political scene had a deep impact on the politics of Rajasthan. While the event was a turning point in the fortune of Jaisingh, it brought about the downfall and eventual murder of Ajitsingh.

Ajitsingh was deprived of the subedari of Gujarat and Ajmer. As far Jaisingh, he was received by the emperor cordially. The emperor even abolished Jaziya at his instance. In 1722 Jaisingh was appointed as Subedar of Agra and asked to lead an expedition against Chudman Jat, a close supporter of Saiyad brothers. To the good fortune of Jaisingh, Chudaman committed suicide because of family feud even before Jaisingh reached Thun. Badansingh, nephew of Chudman, joined Jaisingh's band-wagon. It made the task of Jaisingh easier.

Jaisingh laid siege to the fort of Thun which was ably defended by Mokhamsingh, the son and successor of Chudaman. After two months fight, Mokhamsingh gave in. He abandoned the fort and fled to Jodhpur where Maharaja Ajitsingh provided him shelter. Jaisingh put Badansingh on the Jat throne. A grateful Badansingh treated himself as a samant (feudatory) of Amber for the rest of his life.

On June 23, 1724 Ajitsingh was killed by his younger son Bakhatsingh at the instance of his elder son Abhaysingh who was close to Jaisingh. The conspiracy to kill Ajitsingh was in fact hatched at Delhi in which the Emperor, Jaisingh and Bhandari Raghunath were involved. Adhaysingh married Jaisingh's daughter even before he reached Jodhpur to condole the death of his father.

With Saiyad brothers and Maharaja Ajitsingh out of the picture, Jaisingh became the most powerful figure in the Mughal court. On November, 25, 1727 Jaisingh laid the foundation of Jainagar, later on known as Jaipur. The city was completed in 1733.

Jaisingh had served as subedar of Malwa thrice in his life time. He was first appointed there in 1714. The Marahatas had started incursions in the province. Besides, the Afghans, the Ahirs and the Girasias were creating trouble. He suppressed their activities with a heavy hand. In 1715 he defeated the Marahata army led by Kanhoji Bhonsle and Khande Rao Dhabadi. He was replaced by Amir Khan in October 1717 as subedar of Malwa.

In October 1729 Jaisingh was again appointed as subedar of Malwa. This time his term lasted only 10 months. In September 1732 he was appointed subedar of the province for the third and the last time. He reached Ujjain in December 1732. Early in January 1733 Malhar Rao Holkar and Ranoji Sindhia set out for Malwa. Joined by other Marahata forces, they engaged Jaisingh near Mandisor. Jaisingh got rid of the Marahatas by paying Rs 6 lakhs and ceding 28 pargnas to them in lieu of chouth and returned to Jaipur.

In November 1734 Mirbaxi Khan-e-Daurai set out for Rajasthan to expel the Marahatas. On his way to Ajmer the Khan was joined by Jaisingh, Abhaysingh and Durjansal of Kota. The Mughal forces clashed with the Marahatas at Rampura. The Marahatas defeated the Mughals and advanced towards Jaipur via Kota and Bundi. Jaisingh advised Mirbuxi to pay Rs 22 lakhs to the Marahatas as chauth of Malwa. The Mirbuxi acted accordingly. When the emperor heard about it, he censured Mirbuxi and Jaisingh both for their conduct.

Jaisingh felt humiliated. He instigated the Marahata ruler Peshawa Bajirao to attack Delhi. Bajirao reached the gates of Delhi in March 1737 and crushed the imperial army at Talkatora. He suddenly retreated to Malwa and humbled the Nizami near Bhopal. He occupied whole of Malwa and the territory between the Narmada and the Chambal.

In the meanwhile, Maharaja Abhaysingh laid a siege to Bikaner. Jaisingh rushed to the help of Bikaner and attacked Jodhpur. Abhaysingh lifted the siege of Bikaner and returned to Jodhpur and entered into a humiliating treaty with Jaipur which made Jodhpur practically subservient to Jaipur. Jaisingh died on 21st September, 1743 after a prolonged illness.

According to Prof. Nihar Rajan Roy of the University of Calcutta Sawai Jaisingh was the Machiavelli of his day with a talent for civil government and court intrigues unequalled by any of his contemporaries<sup>1</sup>. He was not a military hero, but if he had to pursue a military career, it was because he was compelled to do so by the nature of the political situation of the time. His genius lay in another direction and that had found ample expression in his activities for the promotion of science and astronomy as also the planning and building of the city of Jaipur.

The territory of Amber was less than 3000 sq. miles when Jaisingh ascended the throne in 1700 and that too was confiscated by the Mughal emperor, Bahadurshah in 1707. He entered into matrimonial alliance with Maharana Amarsingh II of Udaipur and regained his territory with his help. He finally got reprieve from the emperor and was confirmed in his jagir. It was however not until the downfall of Saiyad brothers in 1720 that he got a real break-through in the Mughal court. Henceforth he turned every opportunity to his self aggrandisement regardless of the means employed. He left on his death a prosperous and large State with an area of 20,000 sq. miles which was more than six times of the territory inherited by him from his father Bishansingh.

S. Jaisingh was a shrewd ruler, yet he messed up the succession issue by his own actions. Shivsingh was the rightful claimant to the throne by virtue of being his eldest son. Jaisingh however, preferred his younger son Iswari singh as his heir apparent under the influence of his wife Khichi Rani. He eliminated the 22 year old Shivsingh alongwith his mother at Mathura in 1724 to clear the way for the succession of Iswarisingh<sup>2</sup>. The difficulties of Jaisingh, however, did not end here. Four years later Maharani Chandrakanwar gave birth to Madhosingh. Since Madhosingh was entitled to the Kachhawa throne in the light of the commitment made by Jaisingh to the Maharana of Udaipur at the time of Jaisingh's marriage with his daughter Chandrakanwar, Jaisingh tried to remove the young child from Iswarisingh's path. Chandrakanwar, however, foiled his attempts. Later on Chandrakanwar along with Madhosingh went away to Udaipur and stayed there till Madhosingh ascended the Jaipur throne in January 1751<sup>3</sup>.

1. Hindustan Standard, Congress Number 1948, p.9

2. Sooryamal Mishran, Vansh Bhaskar, p. 100. The presumption made by Jadunath Sarkar in his book 'A History of Jaipur' that Shivsingh and his mother might have died of cholera does not carry conviction in the light of what has been stated in Vansbhaskar whose author Misran was a historian of repute..

3. Shyamaldas, Veer Vinod, part-II p. 1973-74.

**Weak successors**

Jaisingh's death made all the difference to Jaipur State. The problems left by him were of far greater magnitude than his successor could cope with. When Iswarisingh ascended the throne Mewar was already up in arms against Jaipur on the succession issue. Hada Ummedsingh of Bundi harboured a grivance that Jaisingh had made his puppet Dalelsingh as ruler of Bundi after dispossessing his late father Budhsingh. Kotah and Udaipur both supported his claim. To join the trio came the Marahatas. Iswarisingh was hardly capable of dealing with this formidable combination. A number of bloody battles between the two camps took place. In December 1750 Iswarisingh committed suicide, when the Marahata leader Malhar Rao Holkar attacked Jaipur. The Marahatas invited Madhosingh from Udaipur and put him on the throne.

During the period of his reign, Madhosingh had to pay 'chauth' to the Marahatas from time to time. His achievement in the battle field was his victory over Raja Jawaharsingh of Bharatpur who had plundered the Jaipur territory while going on a pilgrimage to Pushkar. In 1753 the Mughal emperor Ahamad Shah granted him the jagir of Ranthambhor. Madhosingh died in March 1768. He was succeeded by his five year old son Prithvisingh who ruled for about ten years. On his death in April 1778 his 13 year old younger brother Pratapsingh ascended the throne.

In 1784, the Marahata leader, Mahadaji Sindhia became regent and commander-in-chief of the Mughal emperor. As Pratapsingh failed to pay khiraj to Delhi, Sindhia attacked Jaipur. In a battle at Patan, he defeated the Jaipur army and plundered the Rajput camp. Jaipur agreed to pay Rs 17 lakhs to Sindhia and the pargana of Rampur to Holkar. Later on, Jaipur also suffered at the hands of a Marahata commander, Lakhwa Dada. Pratapsingh died in August 1803.

Jagatsingh succeeded Pratapsingh. He was given to pleasure and was hated by his samants and public alike particularly because of the unusual status and importance given by him to a prostitute named Ras Kapoor. It was during his time that the States of Jaipur, Jodhpur and Udaipur took up arms against each other on the issue of the marriage of Krishna Kumari, the daughter of Maharana Bhimisingh. Peace returned to the region only after Krishna Kumari was made to commit suicide.

In April 1818 Maharaja Jagatsingh entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British East India Company. The State agreed to pay

Rs 8 lakhs annually as khiraj to the British Government. In return, the British Government took the responsibility of defending the State from outside aggression and internal revolt. Jaipur, thus, came under the suzerainty of the British.

### **The Shekhawats**

The history of Amber/Jaipur shall not be complete without a brief description of the Shekhawati region which constitutes the modern districts of Sikar and Jhunjhunu covering an area of 13660 sq. kms.

The discovery of pottery and copper implements in the area in recent years has revealed that a settlement had existed in the region as far back as 2500 B.C. The people of the Indus Valley Civilization met their requirements of copper from the mines at Khetri. In the famous epic, the Mahabharat, we find a reference to Viratnagar, now called Bairath. It was the capital of the Matsya-desh. It was part of the Mauryan empire in the third century B.C. The stone inscription and other archaeological finds at Bairath proved that Bhuddhism had flourished in the region during the reign of Ashoka the Great.

There is evidence that the imperial Pratiharas had ruled over Matsya in the early part of tenth century. Later on the state was disintegrated into small principalities of Chauhans. Amongst the Chauhan chiefs was one Karamchand who embraced Islam at the instance of Sultan Firoz Tuglaq. The latter gave him the new name, Kayamkhan<sup>1</sup>. He became subedar of Hissar and died in 1419.

Kayamkhan was succeeded by his son Tajkhan who continued to be the subedar of Hissar till his death in 1448 A.D. His son Fateh Khan was, however, expelled from Hissar by Sultan Bahlol Lodi. Fateh Khan came to Shekhawati and founded a new town of Fatehpur in 1449<sup>2</sup>. He established an independent principality of his own. The Fatehpur family was known as Kayamkhanis after the name of Fateh Khan's grand father Kayamkhan. The last of the Fatehpur nawab was Mayamb Khan who had ascended the throne in 1729 A.D. In 1731 Rao Shivsingh of Sikar captured Fatehpur and the Kayamkhani dynasty of Fatehpur came to an end.

Muhammad Khan, one of the scions of the Kayamkhan family occupied Junjhunu in 1450. The last in the line of this family was Rubel Khan who died issueless in 1730. Sadulsingh Shekhawat, the chief

1. Dr. Dashrath Sharma, *Kayam Khan Raso*, p. 11

2. Dr. Dasharath Sharma, *Ibid*, p. 32.

executive officer of the late nawab Ruhel Khan occupied Jhunjhunu with the help of Shivsingh of Sikar. The Kayamkhani rule in Shekhawati lasted about 80 years.

The Kachhawa prince Udaikaran ruled over Amber from 1367 to 1389 A.D. He conferred the jagir of Amarsar on one of his sons, Baloji, whose successor Mokai had no issue for quite some years. He met a well known Fakir Sheikh Burhan Chisti and requested him to bless him with a son. As luck would have it, a son was born to one of the wives of Mokai in 1433. The grateful Kachhawa named the boy as Shekha as a mark of respect for the Sheikh. A tomb of the Sheikh is still there at a place 22 kms away from Amarsar. The Shekhawats even now go to the tomb to pay their homage to the late Fakir.

Shekha, whose offsprings were known as Shekhawats, occupied the throne of Amarsar at an age of 12 in 1445. The ruler of Amber, Chandrasen, conferred on him the title of 'Maharao'. He treated Shekha, as his feudatory. Shekha, however, asserted his independent status. The result was that there was war between the forces of Shekha and Chandrasen in which Amber forces were defeated on the river Kukas in 1447. Shekha added a lot of territory to his principality. He was seriously wounded in a battle against Gonds and died in 1488. According to Tod, he was in possession of 360 villages at the time of his death. The region controlled by him was known as 'Shekhawati'.

Raisal, one of the great grand sons of Shekha, established the principality of Khandela. The Mughal emperor, Akbar, made him one of his mansabdars and conferred on him the title of Raja. Raisal participated in a number of campaigns launched by Akbar in Gujarat and Sind. On Raisal's death his principality was divided amongst his six sons namely, Girdhari (Khandela), Lalsingh (Khachariawas), Bhojraj (Udaipurwari), Tirmal (Kansati-Sikar), Parasmai (Babai) and Hari Ram (Mundri).

Bhojraj was succeeded by Todarmal. The latter's second son, Sadulsingh occupied Jhunjhunu when its nawab Ruhel Khan Kamkhani died issueless in 1730. Sadulsingh expanded his territory considerably. On his death in 1742 his principality was divided amongst his five sons, whose Thikanas were known as 'Panchpana'. Jorawarsingh became the chief of Malsisar, Kisbansingh of Khetri, Nawalsingh of Nawalgarh and Kesarisingh of Bisau.

Unlike the other Rajput rulers, chiefs and jagirdars, the Shekhawats did not follow the rule of primogeniture. They distributed

their jagirs amongst their sons equally. The result was that with the end of the Mughal empire in India, the Shekhawati was fragmented into a number of Thikanas. The rulers of Jaipur took advantage of the situation and brought them under their sway.

### **The Khandelwals**

Apart from the Kachhava samants, the Khandelwal (Jain) community played a leading role in Amber/Jaipur State. The community, also known as Saravagis, produced a galaxy of administrators and scholars. Raja Mansingh, who ascended the Amber throne in 1589, appointed Sanghi Nanu Godha as his minister. Godha spent a number of years in Bengal with Mansingh when the latter was the subedar of the province. He built a number of Jain temples in Bengal.

Sanghi Mohandas Badjatia served Mirza Raja Jaisingh as Diwan. He built the temple of Vimalnath at Amber. Quite a few Khandelwals served as ministers of Sawai Jaisingh II. The most prominent among them was Ram Chandra Chhabra. When Bahadurshah I confiscated Amber in 1707, it was Chhabra who recovered Amber from the Mughals with the help of Mewar forces and reinstalled Jaisingh II on the Amber throne. Chhabra served Jaisingh not only as his minister but also as commander of his forces and participated in a number of campaigns. He was responsible for settling the dispute between Jaipur and Jodhpur over the salt lake of Sambhar. Quite appropriately Ram Chandra was known as the 'Dhal of Dhundhar', (Sheild of Amber).

Vijayram Chhabra was yet another minister of Sawai Jaisingh. When the Mughal emperor expressed his desire to marry Jaisingh's sister, Chhabra took courage and got her married to Rao Buddh Singh of Bundi. Acknowledging his services on this account, Jaisingh stated in a copper plate granted to him that the Kachhawas would remain ever grateful to him for the courageous feat performed by him.

Rao Kriparam Pandya served S. Jaisingh from 1723 to 1733 as minister. He also represented Jaipur in the Mughal court at Delhi where he rose to the rank of a mansabdar. It is said that he contributed a crore of rupees in the building of Jaipur city founded by his master S. Jaisingh.

The peaceful city of Jaipur became centre of communal tension during the reign of S. Madhosingh I (1750-1767). The Maharaja was a staunch Shaivite. His guru Shyam Tiwari destroyed some Jain temples

and started persecuting the Jain community. In 1761 Balchand Chhabra became minister. He succeeded in convincing the Maharaja that Tiwari and his supporters were doing incalculable harm to the social fabric in the State. Tiwari was expelled from the State and communal harmony was restored.

Balchand's sons, Jaichand and Raichand, also served as ministers of Jaipur State. Raichand Chhabra was the most powerful Diwan of Sawai Jagatsingh (1802-1818). It was he who averted a serious confrontation between Jaipur and Jodhpur on the question of marriage of the Mewar princess, Krishna Kumari. He was also responsible in rescuing Jagatsingh from the bandit leader Ameer Khan by giving him a bribe of Rs one lakh. An ungrateful Maharaja, however, got him arrested at the instance of the Rash Kapoor gang led by one Shivnarayan and interned him in Jaigarh fort. Later on he was killed by the same gang in 1807.

The contribution of Khandelwal Jains to the Jain literature was significant. The well known poet Daulat Ram Kasliwal, who was born at Amber in 1692 A.D., translated several ancient 'Prakrit' works into Hindi. He wrote a number of books including Vivek Vilas, Shrenik Charitra etc. He died in 1772.

Pandit Todarmal was a great Jain scholar. He was a reformist. He opposed the institution of Bhattarakas. Unfortunately Maharaja Madhosingh I, who was then under the influence of Shaivites, got him trampled to death under the feet of an elephant when he was barely 47 years of age.

### **Administrative set-up**

The reign of Sawai Jaisingh II was the high water mark of the Kachhawa State. The territory of the State expanded from a bare 3000 sq. miles to 20000 sq. miles. The revenue of the State reached Rs. 1 crore<sup>1</sup>. The most of the territory acquired by Jaisingh was taken by him on 'ijara' from the Mughal mansabdars who found it difficult to recover the land revenue from the peasants. This territory was gradually absorbed in Jaipur State as the Mughal empire started disintegrating.

The Mughals treated the rulers of Jaipur and indeed all other rulers who had accepted the Mughal suzerainty as their Jagirdars or Jamindars. The rulers, however, enjoyed complete autonomy as long as they were loyal to the emperor. The succession in the house of Kachhawas was

1. Col. Tod. A & AR. Part II, p. 350-351.



governed by the law of primogeniture, though some time the Mughal emperors did not hesitate to ignore the traditional law. For instance Jahangir put Bhaosingh on the Amber throne, though Mahasingh was the rightful claimant.

The highest functionary in the State was called Pradhan. He controlled the budget and supervised various departments. The Pradhan was assisted by Desh-Diwan and Diwan Hajuri. The Desh-Diwan looked after the district administration and collection of taxes while the Diwan Hajuri controlled the jagirs and karkhanas. The commander of the State forces was called Baxi who was accountable to the ruler through the Pradhan<sup>1</sup>.

The State was divided into several parganas, each of which was incharge of an amil. The amil was not only the chief executive officer of the pargana but also discharged judicial functions. The amil was assisted by a faujdar, a kotwal, a havildar, a daroga-treasury and other supporting staff. The salary of the amil was between Rs. 100-125 per month while that of other employees ranged from Rs 12 to Rs. 30 per month. The amil and the faujdar had the powers of sentencing an accused to death in case of decoity or theft. They were also empowered to chop a hand of a person accused of such offences. The petty civil and criminal disputes were settled by the traditional panchayats.

The State had a net work of intelligence. It engaged informers not only within the State but also in Delhi to keep the ruler informed regarding the day-to-day developments at the Mughal court<sup>2</sup>. Though the Jaipur rulers could manage to collect an army of nearly 50,000 when the situation demanded, the regular army was a small one.

The main source of the State's income was land revenue which was assessed through various systems such as jabti, batai or kunta. The land revenue on cash-crops was realised in cash while on other crops in kind. The rate of land revenue was practically half of the produce. In addition, the peasants had to pay a number of lag bags<sup>3</sup>. The State also levied lag bags on the basis of castes and communities. Another source of revenue was chungli, rahadari etc. levied on sale, import and export of various commodities. Like other Rajput States more than half the territory of the State was under jagir. The Jagirdars were autonomous in their respective territories. They paid nominal cess to the State.

1. V.S. Bhatnagar, *Sawai Jaisingh (Hindi)* Op. 179-80

2. V.S. Bhatnagar, *Ibid*, p. 198

3. V.S. Bhatnagar, *Ibid*, p. 191

### **The Jaipur school of art**

The Kachhawa rulers had come under the Mughal umbrella as early as 1562 A.D. and flourished as their faithful allies till the disintegration of the Mughal empire. It was, therefore, natural that the Jaipur school of painting was inspired by the Mughal school. It had, however, its own identity as regards technique, colour composition etc. Interestingly the school grew and flourished not during the hey days but in the twilight of the Mughal school.

The beginning of the Jaipur school was modest. Raja Mansingh (1590-1614) had the walls of his palace at Amber painted with pictures of birds, animals, flowers and floral plants in bright hues of red, yellow and green. The panels of these paintings have been found in Mansingh's palace only a few years back. These panels show Krishna playing at his flute under the Kadamba tree flanked by the milk maids<sup>1</sup>. No substantial contribution in this direction was made by Mansingh's successors Mirza Raja Jaisingh and Bishansingh.

The artists of the Mughal courts had started decending upon the Rajput States during the reign of Aurangzeb to whom the art and the artists were an anathema. Two Mughal painters, Fazil Muhammad and Sadiq Muhammad, joined the court of Sawai Jaisingh (1699-1743) during whose reign the Jaipur school made big strides. Shivdas Rai who adorned the court of S.Jaisingh, produced the famous illustrated work *Saras-ras-granth*. It contains 39 full page illustrations dealing with the Krishna theme<sup>2</sup>.

Like the Mughals, the Kachhava rulers also developed their love for portraits. Sahib Ram, a famous artist, was responsible for painting the portraits of Jaisingh II, Iswarisingh, Madhosingh I, Prithvisingh, Pratapsingh and Jagatsingh. In these portraits he has given particular attention to dresses, ornaments and physical features<sup>3</sup>. Sahib Ram started his career in the later part of Jaisingh's reign and served the Jaipur court for more than 60 years.

During the reign of Iswarisingh and Madhosingh, a prominent artist Lala painted huge hunting pictures and scenes of animal fighting. The walls of Madhovilas in Chandra Mahal built by Madhosingh are decorated with panels of frescoes showing the Maharaja in the company of dancing girls and musicians.

1. Dr. Ashok Kumar Das, *Cultural Heritage of Jaipur*, p. 121-122

2. *Ibid*, p. 126.

3. *Ibid*, p. 126-27

The greatest contribution to the Suratkhana of Jaipur was made by Sawai Pratapsingh who ascended the throne in 1778. He had a galaxy of painters such as Sahib Ram, Lala, Triloka, Saligram, Govinda, Faizulla etc. in his court. Miniature painting made great strides during his rule. It was during his reign that the illustrated sets of Ramayan, Bhagawat Puran, Geet Govind etc. were prepared. The painters brought new dimension to the Jaipur school adding a large number of thumb nail sketches to the Suratkhana collection<sup>1</sup>.

Sawai Jagatsingh was given to vices. No wonder the paintings of his time showed him as a romantic personality enjoying dance and music with his beloved courtesan, Ras Kapoor. He was virtually the last Kachhawa ruler who extended patronage to painters and artists.

### **The performing art**

The contribution of Kachhawa rulers to the performing arts like dance, drama and music was no less important. In his work 'Mancharitra' composed in 1585 A.D., Anrtilal has referred to musical instruments like Jaltarang, Veena, Mraudang etc. being played in the Amber palace. Hastak Ratnavali, a book on dance postures, was written in 1673 during the reign of Ram Singh. The Gunijankhana was presumably established by S. Jaisingh. It employed musicians, singers and dancers. S Pratapsingh put his music teacher Chand Khan in charge of Gunijan khana. He gave a big philip to its activities. He commissioned many books on musicology such as Swrasagar, Ragratnakar, Sangeetsagar etc.

Maharaja Ramsingh II had a number of musicians in his court. Ustad Rajab Ali Khan, a great exponent of Veena and Ustad Baharam Khan Dagar, the Drupad maestro, had adorned his court. Hari Vallabhacharya composed a text on Ragnala. About 160 artists were employed in the Gunijankhana during Ramsingh's reign. Ramsingh built the Ram Prakash theatre which was one of its own kind in north India in his time.

### **The architecture**

The remains of the circular Buddhist temple at Bairath belonging to the third century B.C. are the oldest architectural finding in the Jaipur region. The Sakraimata temple near Khandela and the two temples at Abaneri and Bhawanipura belong to the Gurjar Pratihar period. The earliest religious monument found at Amber is the Soorya Mandir dating back to the tenth century A.D. The temple at Visalpur, which bears an

1. Ashok Kumar Das, *Ibid.* p. 130

inscription of 1231 V.S., was built by Vighraaj, the Chauhan ruler of Ajmer. The Jagat Siromani temple at Amber was constructed by prince Jagatsingh, a son of Raja Mansingh I. A number of Jain temples were constructed at Amber and Jaipur during the 17th and the 18th century, when the Jain community was at the helm of affairs in the State. The temples, Kala Hanuman, Gadh Ganesh, Govind Deoji and scores of other temples at Galta belong to the 18th century<sup>1</sup>.

The Shishodiya Rani-ka-bag and the Vidyadhar-ka-bag laid out during S.Jaisingh II's regime are fine examples of the park architecture. The well known Ramnivas garden was planned and built during the reign of S. Ramsingh II. In the field of fort architecture, the forts of Nahargarh, Jaigarh, Motidungari and Hathroi can be sited. These forts commanded strategic importance during the medieval period. Incidentally, however, none of them witnessed any battle. A number of cenotops of architectural value are situated on the Amber-Shahpura road, Gettore and Jaipur-Amber Road. Most of them are surmounted by domes and finials.

### **Literature**

The Kachhawas extended their patronage to the scholars as well. Poets Amritraj and Narottam Kavi served the court of Raja Mansingh I and composed 'Man Charit'. The poems recorded contemporary historical events. Gopal Bhatt's manuscript written in 1718 gives a vivid description of the court of Mirza Raja Jaisingh. The great poet Bihari of the 'Bihari Satsayee' fame adorned the court of the Mirza Raja. Kulpati Mishra was another poet of Mirza Raja's court. He also served Raja Vishnusingh. He wrote Durga Bhakti Chandrika, Sangram-sar, Ras-rahasya and translated the drama Abhi-gyan Shakuntla of Kalidas and Ratnavali of Harsh into Hindi. Mirza Raja's son and successor Ramsingh I was himself a writer and wrote Roopmanjari, Dhatu-manjari and Chhavi-tarang. Incidentally it was Ramsingh who established Pothi Khana which is responsible for the preservation of the literary heritage of the Kachhawas.

S. Jaisingh made notable contribution in the field of astronomy. He collected European, Arabic and Persian books on astronomy. He composed a commentary 'Brahma-bodhini' on the Sutras. His successor Ishwasingh was the author of 'Bhaktmala' in Sanskrit. Similarly Maharaja Madhosingh I composed 'Madhawa Nandini', 'Padyavali' and 'Subodh Komudi'. He had a galaxy of scholars in his court who produced

1. Dr. Satya Prakash, Cultural Heritage of Jaipur, p.17

numerous works in Sanskrit and Hindi. Some of the scholars were Dwarkanath Bhatt (Madhava Vijaya Kavyam), Brijnath Bhatt (Padya Taringini) and Shyamsundar (Madhav Vilas).

Sawai Pratapsingh was another ruler who patronised poets and scholars. He himself was no mean poet. According to Bahura<sup>1</sup> twenty of his works have already been published. During his regime, Hindi poet Padmakar flourished. The latter composed 'Pratap Prasasti'.

### **City planning**

Sawai Jaisingh turned the tiny Amber principality into a big Kachhawa State. His contribution to art and culture was enormous. Yet what has made him immortal is the city of Jaipur founded by him in 1727 AD. The city was planned and built by Vidyadhar under the supervision of S.Jaisingh. One of the directions given by S.Jaisingh as quoted in Bhojansar is reproduced below :

"Jainivas should come within the city, that is my wish. There should be many cross roads with shops on them. The back yards of the houses should meet together".

Vidyadhar carried out the instructions of his master in letter and spirit and the grateful Jaisingh made him 'Desh Diwan' (Revenue Minister) as a reward for his services. The city was completed in 1729. Subsequently Maharaja S. Pratapsingh and S. Ramsingh II made notable contribution to this 'City of Wonders' as Kipling called it. They improved its architecture and environment.

Jaipur was built in 7 square mile area. The city-wall was 20' high and 9' thick. The city was divided into 9 rectangular blocks known as Chokaries. The two mile and forty yard long main high-way ran east to west connecting Soorajpol and Chandpol. On the north of the highway were two Chokaries which covered the palace campus consisting of palaces, temples, office buildings, parks and astronomical observatory. Three major roads (now four) perpendicular to the highway ran north to south along the entire length of the walled city intersecting the main streets. The lanes were 27' wide, the streets 54' and the roads 108'. At the crossings of the main roads were the squares locally known as Chopars. On both sides of these roads were the shops uniform in size and shape. The terraces over the shops were open. The verandhas were added to the shops in recent times. Initially only four bazars namely,

1. Shri Gopal Naraya Bahura is a well known oriental scholar.

Johari bazar, Sireh Deodi bazar, Kishanpole bazar and Gangori bazar were developed. As the city expanded, three more bazars i.e. Chandpol, Tripolia and Ramganj were brought into being. The shops were constructed by the State and then sold out to the businessmen. Behind the shops are the residential areas.

Originally the buildings in the city were coloured in light pale. It was Maharaja Ram Singh II who got it coloured pink and made Jaipur famous as 'Pink City' through out the world. Again it was Ramsingh who built the 'Ramnivas Garden' providing lungs to the walled city. Earlier, Maharaja Pratapsingh had built the Havamahar in the palace complex adding another attraction for the tourists. The beauty of the city lies in the uniformity and the symmetry of the shops, bazars and the houses along the roads.

### **(7) ALWAR**

The principality of Alwar was carved out in the Mewat region by Pratapsingh Naruka, a scion of the Kachhava family of Amber in 1775 AD. During the eleventh century AD. the Mewatis (Meos) were feudatories of the Chauhans of Ajmer. They became independent after the defeat of the last Chauhan king Prithvi Raj III at the hands of Muhammad Gori in 1192 and often came into conflict with the Sultans of Delhi. The Meos, who were Hindus, embarrassed Islam in the 14th century.

In 1450 Ahamad Khan, chief of Mewat, accepted the suzerainty of Sultan Bahadur Lodi. In 1482 he captured Alwar from the Rajputs and made it his capital. His son and successor, Sardar Hassan Khan Mewati, fought against Babur, the founder of Mughal empire in India, in the battle of Panipat in 1526. He also fought against him in the battle of Khanwa in 1527 and lost his life. Henceforth Mewat became part of the Mughal empire.

When the Mughal empire was in the process of disintegration, a new star rose on the horizon of Mewat. In 1671, Mirza Raja Jaisingh of Amber granted Macheri to Kalyansingh Naruka, a Kachhava Jagirdar of Mozamabad, for the bravery displayed by him in suppressing the Meos. Pratapsingh Naruka, who succeeded Kalyansingh, led the Jaipur forces to victory against Jawahar Singh of Bharatpur in 1766. The grateful Maharaja conferred on him the title of 'Rao-Raja' and also permitted him to construct forts at Macheri and Rajgarh. This gave rise to Pratapsingh's ambition to become independent of Jaipur.

On the death of Madhosingh in 1768 his son Prithvisingh ascended the Jaipur throne at the age of 5. Pratapsingh Naruka became regent of the child prince. In that capacity he rendered military help to the Mughal commander Najaf Khan in his campaign against Bharatpur. The emperor, Shah Alam II, made Pratapsingh as his mansabdar on the recommendations of Najaf Khan. Pratapsingh thus became independent of Jaipur. In 1775 he captured Alwar from the Jats and made it his capital<sup>1</sup>.

In 1778 S.Prithvisingh died. He was succeeded by his younger brother Pratapsingh as ruler of Jaipur. Pratapsingh Naruka sponsored Mansingh as claimant to the Jaipur throne presenting him as posthumous son of Prithvisingh. At his instigation the Marahata leader, Mahadaji Sindhia, attacked Jaipur and crushed the Kachhavas at the battle of Tunga in 1790. Pratapsingh Naruka took advantage of the situation and occupied some of the areas of Jaipur State. He died in December 1790.

Bakhtawarsingh succeeded Pratapsingh as ruler of Alwar at the age of 15. He was harassed by Jaipur as well as by the Marahatas. He was defeated by Sindhia at the battle of Kathumar. Jaipur occupied some parganas of Alwar with the help of Marahatas. Surrounded by enemies, Bakhtawarsingh appealed to the British East India Company for help. The latter was waiting for such an opportunity. General Lake rushed to Alwar and defeated the Marahatas at Kathumar and Laswadi. The region was cleared of the Marahatas. The Company granted parts of Haryana and Mewat to Bakhtawarsingh who entered into a treaty "of mutual help" with the Company in November 1803.

In 1811 the Meos of Tijara revolted against Bakhtawarsingh but he crushed the revolt with the help of the East India Company. The same year Bakhtawarsingh sent his army against Jaipur to install his supporter Kushali Ram Bohra as Diwan of Jaipur. He had, however, not only to withdraw his army under pressure from the East India Company but had also to enter into a new treaty with the Company in July 1811 under which Alwar was bound not to interfere or have relation with any other ruler without the approval of the Company. Bakhtawarsingh died in February 1815.

Bakhtawarsingh committed atrocities on the Muslim population of his State. He got the noses of several Faqirs cut. He dug out the dead bodies from the grave yards and dispatched them outside the State. He destroyed a number of mosques and built temples in their places. In other words he was a mini Hindu version of the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb.

<sup>1</sup> Shyamaldas, *Veer Vinod* Part II page 1377.

Rao Pratapsingh, the founder of Alwar State, patronized the Jaipur school of art. A slightly new direction was given to the art of painting in the State during the period of Rao Bhakhtawarsingh. The wall paintings in Rajgarh palace laid the foundation of the Alwar School of painting which flourished during the British period.

## **(8) JAISALMER**

### **History**

Situated as it was in the great Thar desert, the Bhati (Yadava) kingdom of Jaisalmer enjoyed comparative peace till the forces of Allauddin Khilji laid a siege to the fort of Jaisalmer in 1304 during the reign of Rawal Jaitsingh. The Rawal died in 1311, while the siege was still on. He was succeeded by his son Moolraj who continued the fight against the Sultan's forces. He ordered 'Shaka' in 1316, when he found that the fort was short of ration. Seven hundred Rajputs led by Moolraj fell fighting and hundreds of women committed 'Johar'.

The Khilji's army occupied the kingdom after a twelve year long siege. It soon found to its dismay that occupation of Jaisalmer was more a liability than an asset. After about two years, it locked the fort and left the kingdom. A few years later Ghadsi, a scion of the Bhati family, occupied the deserted fort. He constructed the well known 'Ghadsisar' tank. After his death in 1361, Jaisalmer again passed into oblivion till Rawal Lunkaran ascended the throne in 1528 AD.

In 1540 Humayon, who was deprived of Delhi, went to Marwar to seek help of the powerful ruler Rao Maldeo. The latter, instead of extending help, attempted to arrest him. Humayon went to Jaisalmer. Here too he was disappointed. Lunkaran not only refused help but got the wells filled with sand so that Humayon and his forces could not get even drinking water. Humayon made his way to Amarkot in Sindh.

In 1550, Amir Ali Khan was removed from the throne of Kandhar. Lunkaran provided him and his entourage shelter in Jaisalmer. The ungrateful Khan made an attempt to occupy the fort. Amir Khan was killed along with his men. In the process, however, Lunkaran and 400 of his followers also lost their lives.

Lunkaran was a great social reformer. It was on his invitation that thousands of Bhatias, who had earlier courted Islam, came to Jaisalmer from Sindh and joined the Hindu fold again according to Vedic rites.



Lunkaran himself shared meals with them and accepted them as part of the Bhati community.

In 1570 Jaisalmer accepted the suzerainty of the Mughals. Maharawal Harraj went to Nagaur and married his daughter to the emperor Akbar who was camping there. It was a pity that Bhatīs of Jaisalmer, who waged a bitter struggle against the forces of Khilji for twelve long years, gave in so meekly to the Mughals.

Harraj humbled Sodhas of Amarkot. He secured Pokaran in 1576 from Chandrasen of Marwar on payment of Rs 12500. The famous folk lore 'Dhola Marwani' was translated into a lyric by the Jain Yati Kushalchandra during Harraj's reign. The lore was originally written by Kallol in 1546<sup>1</sup>.

Amarsingh, who succeeded the Jaisalmer throne in 1659 AD, was in the good books of Aurangzeb. He occupied Barmer. The emperor conferred on him the parganas of Pokaran, Phalodi and Malani. Amarsingh defeated the Balochas and suppressed the Channa Rajputs. He successfully fought against the forces of Bikaner and incorporated Pungal in his kingdom. He constructed quite a few stepwells and brought a 'nullah' (canal) known as 'Amarkas' from the river Indus. He introduced 'Amarshahi' measures in the State.

On the death of Amarsingh in 1701 his son Jaswantsingh succeeded him. All the territorial gains made by Amarsingh were lost during the short tenure of the new ruler. Bikaner occupied Pungal. The State's territory close to the Sutlej was captured by Daud Khan of Shikarpur whose successors founded the Bahawalpur State some time in 1730 A.D.

The darkest period of Jaisalmer's history was the 58 year long reign of Maharawal Moolraj II who ascended the throne in 1761. He was a puppet in the hands of his Diwan, Sarupsingh Tawari. The Diwan suppressed the Bhati Jagirdars engaged in dacoities and robberies with a heavy hand. This raised their ire against him. The disgruntled Jagirdars found in heir-apparent Raisingh a supporter, as Tawari had cut his allowances. Raisingh killed Tawari in the open court in connivance with the Jagirdars and interned the Maharawal in the palace.

Jorawarsingh, a Bhati jagirdar and his followers freed the Maharawal. The latter externed Raisingh and appointed Salamsingh, the eleven year old son of Swaroopsingh Tawari as Diwan. Raisingh returned

1. G.S.Gehlot—Rajputana Ka Itihas Vol.I p. 672

to the State after a couple of months. The Maharawal, however, put him and his family in jail. As he grew in age and authority, Salamsingh assumed dictatorial powers. He liquidated Raisingh, his wife and two sons. He also got murdered some Jagirdars hostile to him and some members of the ruling family. He thus established a rule of terror. The result was that most of the Jagirdars who were responsible for maintaining law and order in their respective jagirs, deserted their homes and took to crimes. The farmers left the State in disgust. There was lawlessness all around. It is interesting to note that the Marabatas, who had created havoc in Marwar, Mewar, Jaipur and several other States of Rajasthan, did not touch Jaisalmer knowing that they would get nothing there except 'handful of millets.'

In 1818 Jaisalmer entered into a subsidiary alliance with the British East India Company. Moolraj died in 1820. The clever Diwan Swaroopsingh Tawari put Gajsingh, a minor, on the throne. Salamsingh was now all in all. Salamsingh looted the State in an unabashed manner. He collected nearly Rs two crore and misappropriated the state jewellery. Ultimately Gajsingh decided to liquidate Salamsingh. A Bhati Jagirdar attacked him with a dagger. Salamsingh, however, survived though wounded seriously. He was poisoned to death soon thereafter by his own wife. The supporters of Salam Singh wanted to put his son Bisansingh as Diwan. The East India Company effectively intervened and declared that it was the prerogative of the Maharawal to appoint his Diwan. In 1824 the Maharwal, who was now 23 years of age, assumed the reins of Government. A sad chapter in the history of Jaisalmer came to an end.

Jaisalmer was part of the 5 million year old Thar desert. Obviously the Bhati, who migrated from Kandhar more than twelve centuries ago, took shelter in this inhospitable region under heavy military pressure from their enemies. Thanks to its topography, the Bhati State seldom faced aggression from the imperial powers. The forces of Allauddin Khilji no doubt, captured Jaisalmer. They had, however, to abandon it after two years. The hegemony of the Mughals over Jaisalmer was nominal. It was not an accident that the centuries old invaluable Jain manuscripts were stored at Jaisalmer during the Muslim rule in India. The eighth century Jain temple at Lodrawa and the complex of the fifteenth century Jain temples at Jaisalmer remained intact simply because of the inaccessibility of the region.

### **Area and population**

Although Jaisalmer had lost a lot of territory to the neighbouring States, it had still possessed an area of more than 16,000 sq. miles on the eve of British rule in India. The population of the State fluctuated between 50,000 to 75,000 depending on rainfall. The density of population was below 5 persons per sq.km. Thanks to the age old barbaric custom of female infanticide, the ratio between male and female population in the State was 4:3. The population consisted mainly of Rajputs and Muslims. The Muslims were mostly converts. Both the communities were sturdy and only sturdy ones could survive the rigors of weather in the region. The women of Jaisalmer were known for their beauty and managerial skill. The rulers of other States often aspired for marriage with the Bhati princesses. Pungal, from where the proverbial beauty princess Padmini hailed, was once the part of Jaisalmer State.

### **The Economy**

The average rainfall in the State was 5 inches and even this was erratic. Draught was the rule rather than an exception. The wells were 250-400 feet deep. The water was often saline. The people stored the rain water in the kunds or tankas for drinking purposes. Whenever there was a little rainfall, people took to the cultivation of bajra, jowar, moong, moot etc. They also produced wheat, opium etc wherever there was water in the wells. The main occupation of the people was, however, rearing of cattle and sheep and goat. The agriculture was only secondary. The domesticated animals provided them milk, ghee, hides and skins and wool. While their staple food was bajra and jowar, they had to depend on the bark of khejra and other desert trees and the bhurat grass for their survival during droughts. The migration of the people and their cattle in search of food, fodder and water was a normal feature of their lives.

There was no question of Jaisalmer having any roads. The only means of transport was the camel. The bullock cart was of little use because of the shifting sand dunes in the desert State. The vegetation in the State included Robida, Hingota, Thor, Khejra, Dhak, Keir, Fog and Bhurat. The wild animals found in the area were Neelgai, tigers, leopards, chinkara, pigs, wolves, jackals etc.

Near the capital, Jaisalmer, there were mines of yellow stone which was so popular even during the Mughal period that it was exported to Delhi and Agra. The buildings in the town were built of this stone. The town was, therefore, known as "Sona nagari" (golden town). The

main source of the State's revenue was the duties of customs imposed on exports of camels, sheep, goats, wool, hides, skins etc. Understandably, the land revenue was hardly 10% of the State's total revenue.

### **Administrative setup**

Though the State was divided into several parganas, there was hardly any administration in the State except some loose agencies for collecting land revenue, customs and lag bags. There was no regular army or police. Their duties were performed by Jagirdars. There were no schools or any arrangement for medical treatment. The people led a semi-nomadic life in the medieval period.

## **(9) KARALI**

The Yadavas of Tawangarh (Bayana) remained in wilderness for more than a century and a quarter since Mohammad Ghori expelled Kanwarpal from his kingdom in 1196 A.D. Arjunpal, a scion of the Yadava family, recovered some of his ancestral territory from the Muslim rulers. He founded the town of Karali in 1348 and made it his capital. He died in 1361. His successors Vikramaditya, Abhaypal, Prithvipal, Prataprudra etc. continued to hold the Yadava principality in tact.

Chandrapal succeeded Prataprudra in 1449. He was defeated by the Sultan of Malwa, Mahmood Khilji, in 1454. The Yadavas once more lost their principality. Chandrapal's grand son Gopaldas joined the Mughal army. He displayed gallantry in Akbar's campaign in the south. Consequently the emperor granted him his ancestral jagir, which was now part of the Mughal empire, and a mansab of 2000. Gopaldas subjugated the Yadavas of Mansalpur and the Meenas of Bahadurpur. He died in 1589. His successors Dwarkadas, Mukunddas, Jagman, Chhatraman, Dharampal, Ratanpal and Kanwarpal made no significant mark during their rule.

Gopalsingh I succeeded his father Kanwarpal in 1727. He brought the Yadavas of Mukawat and Sarmathura under his control. He extended his territory to some extent. He constructed a boundary wall with red stone around Karali and a beautiful palace in his capital. The Mughal emperor, Mohammad Shah, awarded him 'Mahi Maratib' in 1753. Gopalsingh died in 1757.

Since Gopalsingh had no son, his nephew Tarsampal succeeded him. The Shikarwar Rajputs revolted against him and occupied Karali. Tarsampal, however, crushed them and recaptured the town. He died in

1772. Tarsampal was succeeded by his son Manakpal. The latter defeated the Marahata leader, Rodji Sindiya, The Marahatas, however, later on occupied Sabalgarh. Manakpal remained involved in the family feud till his death in 1804.

Harbaxpal succeeded Manakpal. The Marahatas again attacked Karauli. Harbaxpal agreed to pay Rs 25000 annually as 'khiraj' to the Marahatas. The Maharaja entered into an agreement with the East India Company in November 1817 according to which Karauli came under the suzerainty of the British Government. He died in 1837.

It is surprising that a small State like Karauli with an area of 1987 sq.kms. survived for quite a few centuries. It could only be ascribed to the grit and the determination of the Yadavas. The river Chambal flew on the State's boundary with Gwalior State. The area was mostly hilly but fertile. The main occupation of the people was animal husbandry for which the Yadavas had been known since ancient times. The main crops produced in the State were bajra, jowar, barley and wheat. The only industry in the State was mining of building stone which had been exported outside the State even during the medieval times.

## (10) HADOTI

### 1. Bundi

The region known as Hadoti, which constitutes the present districts of Bundi, Kota, Baran and Jhalawar, has been the most fertile part of Rajasthan since ages. It has two perennial rivers, the Chambal and its tributary the Kali-Sind. There is thus a possibility of settlements along these rivers in the proto-historic age.

The stone inscriptions found near Badawa in tehsil Anta disclose that they were put up in V.S. 295 by the sons of Raja Bal of Maukhari dynasty<sup>1</sup>. Another stone inscription found on the Barkhedi gate of Shergarh indicates that a certain ruler Devdatt of Nag dynasty had ruled in the region in the early ninth century and that he was a follower of Buddhism<sup>2</sup>. Besides, there are some temples in the region which are supposed to have their origin in the Gupta period<sup>3</sup>.

1. Dr. M.L. Sharma, *Kota Rajya Ka Itihas*. 1939 p.24

2. Dr. M.L. Sharma, *Ibid*. p.24

3. Dr. M.L. Sharma, *Ibid*. p.24-25 -

When the Hada Rajputs made inroads in the region in 1242 AD, the Ushahara Meenas were in possession of the Bundi area while the Bhils were in occupation of the Kota area. These tribes had their petty republics (Janpads), each controlled by a leader acceptable to the community.

The Hadas originally belonged to the Nadol branch of Chauhans. When Kutubuddin Aibak, Sultan of Delhi (1206-1216), drove them out of Nadol, Manikrai II, a scion of the Chauhan family of Nadol, established a new principality in the eastern part of Mewar and made Bambawada his capital<sup>1</sup>. In the sixth generation of Manikrai was born Harraj or 'Hado' after whose name the Hada dynasty started. In this dynasty was born Devisingh or Deva in the early part of the 14th century. With the military help of Maharana Laxmansingh of Mewar, Deva captured Bundi, a janpad headed by Jeta Mecna, sometime in 1340. Later on he added Khanpur, Patan, Ghanoli, Lakheri and Karwar to his territory. He remained a loyal samant of Mewar<sup>2</sup>.

Samarsingh succeeded his father Deva in about 1343. He incorporated Kathun, Badod, Ramgarh, Sangor etc. in his principality. He ruled only for three years. His eldest son Narpal succeeded him. The younger son Jetsingh captured Akhelgarh from the Bhils. He defeated Kotya Bhil who had founded Kota in his name. Jetsingh became the ruler of Kota as a feudatary of Bundi.

Narpal defeated Maheshdan Khinchi and occupied Palayatha. Maharana Kheta of Mewar defeated Narpal and made Bundi as his vassal State<sup>3</sup>. Narpal died in 1392 AD. He was succeeded by his son Hamir who ruled Bundi till 1403. His son Rao Veersingh challenged the authority of Maharana Lakha. The latter attacked Bundi but failed to capture it. Veersingh died in 1413 AD.

Berisal the eldest son of Veersingh ascended the Bundi throne in 1413. The Sultan of Mandu, Mohammad Khilji, captured Bundi in 1459. Berisal himself was killed in the battle. His two sons were converted to Islam and were renamed as Samarkandi and Umarkandi. Berisal's son Bhandu or Bhandeo succeeded him. In due course he recovered Bundi. The Mandu army, however, once again occupied it and conferred it on Samarkandi and Umarkandi.

1. Dr. M.L. Sharma, *Ibid.* p.56

2. Col Tod, *A&A of Rajasthan Pt. III* p. 1467, J.S. Gehlot, *Bundi Rajya Ka Itihas*, p.43 and Shyamaldas, *Ibid Pt.II.* p. 106-107

3. J.S. Gehlot, *Op. cit.* p.47

Bhandeo died in 1503 and was succeeded by his son Rao Naraindas. The latter reestablished his authority over Bundi and killed his uncles Samarkandi and Umakandi. He fought under Rana Sanga in the battle of Khanwa in 1527 against Babur. He was killed the same year by one of his samants. His son Surajmal succeeded him.

Surajmal's sister Karmawati was married to Maharana Sanga. Sanga's younger sons, Vikramaditya and Udaisingh, were born of Karmawati who was a favourite of Rana Sanga. Even while he was alive, Sanga gave the jagir of Ranthambore along with its famous fort to her sons. Karmawati and the two princes mostly lived at Ranthambore. Sanga appointed Rao Surajmal Hada as guardian of the young princes. When Sanga's eldest son Ratansingh became ruler of Mewar, he went on a hunting expedition in the jungles of Bundi and invited Surajmal to join him. When Surajmal met Ratansingh, the latter struck at Surajmal. Surajmal counter attacked. Both of them were wounded seriously and died. From now on the Hadas and the Shishodias became sworn enemies. The enmity between the two houses became legendary<sup>1</sup>.

Surtan succeeded his father Surajmal in 1531 at the age of four. He lost Kota to Pathans and Badod and Sisawali to Khinchis. When Surtan came of age, he started misbehaving with the Hada chiefs. The chiefs removed him from the throne in 1554 with the help of Mewar and put Arjun Hada's son, Surjan, on the throne. Surjan built a powerful army. He captured Kota, Badod and Sisawali. In 1559, he occupied Ranthambore by bribing a Pathan kiledar who was holding the fort since Shershah captured it. The Mughal emperor Akbar laid a siege to the fort in 1590. Surjan handed over the fort to Akbar after 15 days siege and accepted the Mughal suzerainty. Akbar conferred on him the title of Rao Raja and granted him a suitable mansab. Surjan, however, went away to Kashi leaving the administration of Bundi to his son Duda. Akbar removed Duda from the throne and put his younger brother Bhoj in his place.

Bhoj had four sons namely, Ratan, Hridayanarain, Keshavdas and Manohardas. He appointed Haridayanarain as Jagirdar of Kota. Bhoj participated in a number of Mughal campaigns in Orissa, Surat and Ahmadnagar with distinction. Bhoj, however, earned the displeasure of Akbar in the later days on two counts. Firstly, he refused to marry his own daughter to Akbar and secondly, he created hurdles in the marriage of the daughter of Raja Mansingh of Amber with prince Salim. He died in 1608.

1. "Hada-Shishodiyon-ka-bair"

### **Division of Bundi**

On the death of Bhoj, his eldest son Ratan Hada ascended the throne. In 1623 the emperor Jahangir sent Rao Ratan and his brother Haridayanarain under prince Parvez to suppress the revolt by another prince Khurram. Haridayanarain fled from the battle-field. Consequently he was removed from the jagir of Kota at the instance of the emperor.

Having been defeated at the battle of Jhunsi, Khurram went away towards south and laid the siege to Burhanpur. Rao Ratan defeated him there too. Madhosingh, one of Rao Ratan's sons, displayed gallantry in the battle. Jahangir conferred on him the jagir of Kota. Khurram apologized to the emperor who put him under Madhosingh's protective custody. Madhosingh extended due courtesy to the prince. In 1629 Jahangir died and Khurram succeeded as emperor in the name of Shahajahan. The grateful emperor made Madhosingh ruler of Kota independent of Bundi and also gave him some more parganas at the cost of Bundi. Rao Ratan died in 1631. He was succeeded by his grandson Satrusal as ruler of Bundi. Madhosingh also formally ascended the throne of Kota on Rao Ratan's death. The division of Bundi was thus formalized into two states, Bundi and Kota.

Satrusal served the Mughal court all his life. He fought bravely in the battle of Daulatabad. In the war of succession amongst the sons of Shahajahan, he sided with Dara and was killed in the battle of Ramugarh in 1658. Aurangzeb came out successful in the war and became emperor even while Shahjahan was still alive.

Bhaosingh ascended the Bundi throne on the death of his father Satrusal. Since Aurangzeb was unhappy with Satrusal for his siding with Dara, he further divided Bundi and gave the parganas of Baran and Mahu to Bhagwatisingh, the younger brother of Bhaosingh and recognized him as ruler, independent of Bundi. It was the second partition of Bundi. After sometime Bhagwatisingh died. Aurangzeb pardoned Bhaosingh and annulled the partition. Baran and Mahu again became part of Bundi State. Aurangzeb appointed Bhasosingh as Faujdar of Aurangabad where the latter died in 1681. As Bhaosingh had no issue, he was succeeded by Anirudhsingh, the grandson of his younger brother. Anirudhsingh ruled over Bundi for 14 years and died in 1695 while serving with the Mughal army in the north-west frontier province. His son, Budhsingh, succeeded him.

In 1707 the Mughal emperor Aurangzeb died. In the war of succession, which followed, Budhsingh sided with Mauzam who came



out victorious in the civil war. Mauzam became emperor and assumed the name of Bahadurshah. The new emperor conferred on Budhsingh the title of Maharao and also granted him some parganas in jagir. Bahadurshah died in 1712. His successors were weak. Taking advantage of the situation, Rao Bhimsingh of Kota captured Bundi. The principality changed hands several times between Budhsingh and Bhimsingh. But Budhsingh was finally able to recapture it in 1720. Budhsingh's troubles had, however, not been over.

Budhsingh had married Amar Kanwar, the daughter of S.Jaisingh of Amber-Jaipur, who was one of the grantees of the Mughal emperor. Amar Kanwar gave birth to a son. Budhsingh refused to own him and cast doubts on the character of Amar Kanwar. This led to estrangement between Jaisingh and Budhsingh. Jaisingh not only got the young child murdered but captured Bundi and put his protegee, Dalelsingh of Karwar, on the Bundi throne in 1729. Budhsingh took shelter with his in-laws at Begun (Mewar) where he died in 1739 leaving behind his son Ummedsingh. Bundi now practically became a feudatory of Jaipur.

With the death of S.Jaisingh in 1743, Ummedsingh's fortune took a turn for the better. Madhosingh, younger son of Jaisingh born of the Mewar princess Chandra Kanwar, challenged the accession of S.Iswarisingh to the Jaipur throne. On the other hand Maharao Durjanshal of Kotah asked S.Iswarisingh to return Bundi to its rightful owner Ummedsingh. Iswarisingh turned down the request. Ultimately the combined forces of Mewar and Kotah assisted by Malhar Rao Holakar defeated S. Iswarisingh at the battle of Bagaru in 1748. S.Iswarisingh had to return Bundi to Ummedsingh. The latter ruled Bundi till 1771 when he took sanyas after handing over the State to his son Ajeetsingh.

Ajeetsingh constructed a fort in the village of Bileta, close to the boundary of Mewar State. Maharana Arisingh of Mewar expressed his resentment over it. Shortly thereafter the Maharana invited Ajeetsingh to Amargarh on a hunting expedition. Ajeetsingh was sceptical about the intentions of the Maharana. He came prepared for any eventuality. During hunting he attacked the Maharana and killed him. A body guard of the Maharana struck Ajeetsingh with a stick wounding him seriously. The latter died after two month in May 1773. The history of 1531 AD. was repeated

Ajeetsingh was succeeded by his four year son, Vishnu Singh. His grand father Ummedsingh returned from sanyas to serve as his guardian. When Vishnusingh came of age, he married the daughter of

Jalimsingh Jhala, Diwan of Kota, in July 1793, much against the wishes of his grand father. Gradually Jhala's men started dominating the Bundi administration. Some of the trusted samants and officers of Bundi were removed from their posts. Ummedsingh was disgusted. He left on a pilgrimage in 1798. When he heard that things were going from bad to worse, he returned to Bundi and impressed upon Vishnusingh to get rid of Jhala's men. Vishnusingh realised his mistake and acted accordingly. Jhala's influence ended in the State.

In 1804, the Marahata ruler, Jashwant Rao Holkar of Indore, entered Kota to cross sword with Col. Manson of the British East India Company. The British army was defeated in the Mukundara valley and had to retreat. Vishnusingh rendered necessary assistance to Manson and his retreating army. This annoyed Holkar. The Marahatas and the Pindaris plundered and devastated the State continuously for six years. The Holkar and the Sindhia virtually divided Bundi between themselves and reduced Vishnusingh to the status of a puppet ruler.

By now the East India Company had established its sway over north India. The sister State of Kota had already entered into a subsidiary alliance with the Company. Bundi followed suit in February 1818 and got rid of the Marahata menance. The State agreed to pay Rs 80,000 per annum as khiraj to the British Government, which in turn assured the return of certain parganas occupied by the Marahatas to Bundi. The British Government also handed over the pargana of Keshavarao Patan to Bundi.

## **2. Kota**

How the principality of Kota emerged has been narrated above. Hada Madhosingh was recognised as ruler of Kota by the Mughal emperor Shahjahan in 1631 soon after the death of his father Rao Ratan, the ruler of the composite State of Bundi<sup>1</sup>. The new principality consisted of eight parganas only.

Madhosingh played a leading role in crushing the revolt of Khan-e-Jahan Lodi, a mansabdar of the Mughal court. Shahjahan conferred on him the jagir of some more parganas and also increased his mansab. In 1635 he participated in the Mughal campaign against Jujharsingh of Bundela. In 1646 Madhosingh joined the Mughal expedition against Kandhar. He died in 1648 soon after his return from

1. Jagdish Singh Gahlot, *Bundi Rajya Ka Itihas* 1960, p.69

the unsuccessful campaign. At the time of his death Madhosingh had about 2000 villages in his principality. His territory included the parganas of Baran and Mahu which were given by the emperor at the cost of Bundi.

Mukundsingh, the eldest son of Madhosingh, succeeded him. Throughout his reign of eight years he remained in the service of the Mughals. He was killed in the war of succession to the Mughal throne amongst the sons of Shahjahan at Dharmat in 1658. Mukundsingh was succeeded by his son Jagatsingh. Since Mukundsingh had sided with prince Dara in the war of succession, Aurangzeb, the new emperor, was unhappy with Kota. Jagatsingh met Aurangzeb and tendered apology for the role of his father in the war of succession. The emperor pardoned him and conferred on him a mansab of 2000. Jagatsingh participated in Aurangzeb's war against his brother Suja. He was killed in the Mughal campaign against the Marahatas in 1683. He left no male issue.

The Hada chiefs put Preamsingh, a grand son of Rao Madhosingh, on the throne. As Preamsingh was found incompetent, the chiefs removed him after a year and installed Kishorsingh, the youngest son of Madhosingh, on the throne. Kishorsingh spent quite a few years in Aurangzeb's campaign in the south. In 1688 he participated in the Mughal expedition against Rajaram, the Jat leader of Bharatpur. For the role played by him in the battle of Beejal against Rajaram, he was given the pargana of Keshwarao-Patan, again at the cost of Bundi. He was killed in the battle of Arkat against the Marahatas in 1696.

Kishorsingh had nominated his second son Ramsingh as heir apparent to the Kota throne in preference to his eldest son Vishansingh. Taking advantage of Ramsingh's absence, who was at Arkat, Vishansingh occupied the throne. Aurangzeb, however, refused to recognize him. He sent Ramsingh with the Mughal army to Kota. Ramsingh defeated Vishansingh at the battle of Anwa and occupied Kota. In 1704 he participated in the Mughal campaign against Marahatas. Pleased with his performance in the campaign, the emperor conferred on him quite a few parganas of Bundi. In the war of succession, following the death of Aurangzeb, Ramsingh sided with Azam. In the battle of Jajav in 1707, Ramsingh was killed and his patron Azam was defeated. The result was that the pendulum in the Mughal court now swung in favour of Bundi whose ruler Budhsingh had fought in favour of the victor i.e. Mauzam.

Bhimsingh succeeded his father Ramsingh as ruler of Kota. He occupied Mangrol, Manoharthana and Shergarh. Mauzam, who became emperor in the name of Bahadurshah, was annoyed with the Hadas of Kota. He authorised the Bundi ruler, Rao Buddhsingh, to occupy the principality of Kota. Buddhsingh invaded Kota twice but was defeated. Fortunately for Kota, Bahadurshah died in 1712. Jahandharshah succeeded him. He did not, however, survive even a year and was succeeded by Farrukhsiyar, who was displeased with Buddhsingh. He asked Bhimsingh to occupy Bundi, which he did in 1713. Farrukhsiyar made him a mansabdar of 5000. S.Jaisingh of Amber, with whose sister Buddhsingh was married, prevailed on the emperor for the return of Bundi to Buddhsingh. In the meanwhile the Saiyad brothers killed Farrukhsiyar and became all powerful in the affairs of the empire. They were unhappy with Buddhsingh because the latter had joined hands with their enemy Chabelram, the subedar of Allahabad. The Saiyads despatched an army with Bhimsingh and others against Bundi. In the battle, which followed, Buddhsingh was defeated. Bundi once again came under Kota. Bhimsingh was killed at Burhanpur while fighting against Nizam in June 1720.

Bhimsingh had assumed the title of Maharao and expanded his territory to a considerable extent. He had employed Madhosingh Jhala of Haldhar in his army. Jhala later on became commander-in-chief of the State forces. Bhimsingh was succeeded by Arjunsingh but the latter died without any issue in 1723. In the short span of his reign, he lost Bundi to Buddhsingh. Arjunsingh had two brothers Shyamsingh and Durjansal. The Hada sardars put Durjansal on the throne. Shyamsingh with the help of S.Jaisingh of Amber attacked Kota but was defeated and killed.

In 1738, the Marahata leader Bajirao Peshwa attacked Kota. Durjansal surrendered. Kota became a vassal State of the Marahatas while still owing allegiance to the Mughals. Finding that the central power at Delhi had become weak, Bajirao Peshwa decided to take on Delhi. From Kota he advanced towards the capital. He looted Kalkadevi, a locality near Delhi. He was, however, defeated by the Vazir at Talkatora. Sometime later, the Peshwa laid a siege to Kota and lifted it only after receiving of Rs 10.00 lakhs from Durjanshal. From now on Kota started paying chauth (Khandni) to the Marahatas.

In 1748 Durjansal along with the Mewar forces defeated S.Iswarsingh of Jaipur at Bagru and succeeded in recovering Bundi for

Ummedsingh, the son of the late Rao Buddhsingh, Durjansal died in 1756 without any issue. The nearest to the ruling family of Kota was Ajeetsingh, the Jagirdar of Anta. Jhala Himmatsingh, the all powerful faujdar of Kota, put him on the throne. The Marahatas recognised Ajeetsingh as ruler of Kota on receipt of a nazarana of Rs 40.00 lakhs.

Satrusal succeeded his father Ajeetsingh in 1758. He had to pay Rs 2.00 lakhs to the Marahatas for recognising him as ruler of Kota. Soon the State had to face an attack of the Jaipur army. Eight jagirs attached to Ranthambhor and held by the Hadas had been taken over by Kota on their request. This invited the wrath of Jaipur, as the sarkar of Ranthambhor was under S.Madhosingh of Jaipur. The Jaipur forces crossed the Chambal and advanced towards Kota. The Hada army led by Jhala Jalamsingh, son of Himmatsingh, defeated the Jaipur forces at Bhatwara. Jhala was elevated as faujdar of Kota. Satrusal died in 1764.

In the absence of a male issue Satrusal was succeeded by his younger brother Gumansingh. By now the Marahatas had complete sway over Rajasthan. They extracted money from Kota from time to time on one pretext or the other. They finally vacated the State after receiving a payment of Rs 6.00 lakhs. Gumansingh died in 1770 leaving behind his 10 year old son Ummedsingh. Jhala Jalamsingh now became all powerful. He eliminated Maharaj Swaroopsingh, the uncle of the ruler, and externed Jashkaran Dhabai from the State. He constructed his own haveli in the fort itself. He created such a terror that a number of Hada sardars took shelter in the neighboring States. He crushed the powerful Hada sardar, Devisingh of Atoon, with the help of Marahatas and confiscated his jagir. He also snatched Shahbad from Meghsingh.

During Ummedsingh's reign the Pindaris had rampaged several parts of Kota. Even Jalamsingh was afraid of them. Ultimately he established friendship with the Pindari leaders Kapookhan and Mirkhan. He also gave the fort of Shergarh to Mirkhan for his residence. The Pindaris stopped their raids in Kota State, They, however, continued their operations in the neighbouring States. In the meanwhile Kota paid Rs 7 lakhs annually to the Marahatas as 'chauth'.

Surrounded by the Marahatas on one side and the Pindaris on the other, Kota was the most vulnerable State. By now the British East India Company had made serious incursions in north India. Jalamsingh started wooing the Company officials. In a letter to Col. James Tod, Jalamsingh

wrote that the Britishers had come to India at the most opportune time. He stated that they need not use force for occupying the country, as the people themselves would hand over the country to them on a platter because of division in their ranks and hatred for each other<sup>1</sup>. Jalamsingh helped the East India Company in crushing the Pindaris and got the parganas of Deeg, Pachpahad, Ahor and Gangard from them as reward.

Kota was one of the earliest states in Rajasthan to have entered into a treaty of subsidiary alliance with Charles Metcalf, the Agent to the Governor General on December 26, 1817. Under the treaty Kota accepted the overlordship of the East India Company. It also agreed to pay Rs 2.5 lakhs as khiraj annually to the company. In an amendment made in the treaty in 1818, the post of Diwan was made hereditary for Jalamsingh Jhala and his successors in recognition of his services to the British Government.

### **Art and Culture :**

Hadoti had made its name in the field of art even before the advent of the Mughals in India. The Hadoti or the Bundi school of Art was first influenced by Mewar and then by the Mughal school for historical reasons. Rao Satrushal (1631-1658) built the Chhater Mahal palace, whose walls were decorated with miniature paintings. Rao Ummedsingh (1748-1771) was a patron of art. In his reign a new turn was given to the Bundi school. Natural scenes along with birds and animals became the main theme of the artists.

During the Mughal period paintings in Bundi were produced on a large scale. It is, therefore, no wonder that the paintings of the Bundi school are found today practically in various museums of the world capitals. The paintings were based on rag-ragini, barah-mas, Krishna-lila and hunting expeditions.

Not much is known so far about the contribution made by Bundi in the field of literature in the medieval period. Of course, Rao Bhavsingh (1658-1705) had the distinction of patronizing the great poet Matiram, whose work 'Lalit-lalam' is one of the richest possessions of the Hindi poetry. Rao Buddhsingh (1695- 1739) was himself a poet of no mean standing. His 'Neh-taran' is regarded as one of the best works in Brij literature.

Kota, which branched off from Bundi in 1631, gave birth to its own independent school of painting during the reign of Ramsingh

1. Tod. Ibid. Page 1420.

(1669-1705). In Bhimsingh's time the Kota school was influenced by the Vallabh Sampradaya school of painting. The result was that the paintings produced during this period mostly centered round Radha and Krishna. The element of hunting was introduced in Kota paintings during Maharwal Ummedsingh's time (1770-1819).

### **Administration.**

The Hadoti region remained victim of the internecine conflicts between the two Hada clans of Bundi and Kota. The Mughal interference in the administration in the two States was thus on a much larger scale than in other Rajput states. The Mughals appointed Kanungos in every pargana of Hadoti. These Kanungos not only watched the empire's interests in the region but also exercised control over the State officials like Hakims, Amils etc. as also over the Jagirdars. The local administration became completely subservient to the nominees of the Mughals. The Kanungos, who were mostly hereditary, were appointed on commission basis which was 2% of the land revenue realized by them in their jurisdiction. The 'Jajia' imposed on Hindus was recovered directly by the employees of the Central power.

The Mughal emperors appointed Kazis who looked after the religious affairs of the Muslims of Hadoti. The Kazis decided all cases involving Muslims in accordance of the provisions of Quaran and Sunna. The Mughals gave them added significance by delivering imperial farmans not to the rulers directly but through the Kazis<sup>1</sup>.

The land revenue system in the region was on the Mughal lines. The land revenue was fixed at one third of the produce. The farmers had the option to pay land revenue in cash or in kind. The system of lata-kunta was adopted for assessment of the crops for purpose of determining the land revenue.

In the administration of criminal justice too, the Hada States followed the Mughals, although there was no penal code as such. The punishment awarded was generally deterrent. For murders and dacoities the sentence of death was freely given. For other offences such as thefts and burglaries, it was common to chop off hands and noses of the culprits. Petty cases were dealt with by the local Panchayats.

<sup>1</sup> Dr M.L. Sharma, *Op. Cit.* p 193-200

The jagirdari system in the Hadoti region was not different from the one prevalent in other Rajasthan States. Amongst the Jagirdars were not only Hadas and other Rajputs but also Brahmins, Gujars, Meenas, Marahatas and Muslims.

The economic conditions in Hadoti during the Mughal period were pretty bad, in spite of its fertile land and good rainfall. The wheat was sold at the rate of Rs 8.00 per 'mani' (12 maunds) and ghee at the rate of 5 seers per rupee. Notwithstanding the low prices of essential commodities, the people remained semi-starved because of their low purchasing power<sup>1</sup>. The wars between Kota and Bundi and the loot and plunder by the Marahatas and the Pindaris had destroyed the economy of the region and reduced the common man to abject poverty.

### (11) SIROHI

Sirohi, a small State with an area of 3181 sq.kms. was situated on the south-eastern tip of Marwar. Mount Abu, having a 32 km. long base, was situated in the heart of the State. The Banas valley separated Abu from the Aravalli range. Guru Shikhar, with an altitude of 1772 metres, was the highest peak in the ranges.

In ancient times the region was governed by Mauryas, Khashetrapas, Hunas, Chawdas, Gahlots and Solankis. When Mahamood Gaznavi invaded India, Dhanduk Parmar was the local chief of the Abu region. He was a feudatory of the Solankis of Gujarat. Gazanavi plundered the Somnath temple in October 1025 AD. Dhanduk, however, did not come to the help of Bhimdeo Solanki, the ruler of Gujarat. Soon after the return of Gazanavi from Gujarat, Bhimdeo sent an expedition against Dhanduk under the command of Vimalshah. The Gujarat army defeated Dhanduk and took him as prisoner.

The Parmar dynasty of Abu lasted till 1311, when Maharao Loomba of the Deora clan of the Chauhans of Jalore captured Abu and Chandravati. Shivbhan, successor of Loomba, built a fort on the Sarnava hill and shifted his capital from Chandravati to the new fort in 1405. Shivbhan's son and successor Sahashmal founded a township below the hill. The town was named Sirohi after name of the hill. Sahashmal captured Malmagara from the Solankis and occupied some parts of Mewar. Annoyed by Shashmal's actions Maharana Kumbha invaded the principality and established his suzerainty over the Deoras.

1. Dr. M.L. Sharma Op. Cit. p. 193-200



Sahashmal was succeeded by his son Lakha in 1551. Maharana Kumba built a fort and the temple of Achleshwar Mahadeo at Achalgarh. He also built the fort of Bansantgarh. The successors of Lakha participated in Mewar's campaigns against Sultan Behlol Lodi and Babur.

After Rao Raisingh's death in 1543 in a battle against Pathans the ruling family of Sirohi remained involved in internecine quarrels for a considerable time. In 1576 Rao Surtan accepted the suzerainty of the Mughal emperor Akbar. In spite of this, skirmishes between Surtan and the Mughal army continued. Sirohi changed hands between the Mughals and Surtan at least three times. Surtan died in 1610. Surtan's son and successor Rajsingh was killed in 1620 by Prithviraj Deora. The samants of Sirohi resisted Prithviraj's attempt to ascend the throne and put Rajsingh's minor son Akheraj on the throne.

In 1663 Udaibhan, son of Akheraj, imprisoned his father and occupied the throne. Maharana Rajsingh of Mewar, however, got Akheraj released from the jail and reinstalled him on the throne. Akheraj killed Udaibhan and one of his sons. He died in 1673 and was succeeded by his another son Udaisingh. The latter too died in 1776. The reign of Udaisingh's successors Barisal, Surtan, Chatrasal, Mansingh, Prithviraj, Takhsingh and Jagatsingh was uneventful.

In 1804 Maharaja Mansingh of Jodhpur attacked Sirohi when Berisal II was its ruler. The Marwar army returned to Jodhpur after plundering several village of Sirohi. In 1812 Udaibhan, who succeeded Barisal II, accepted the suzerainty of Marwar. He also agreed to pay Rs 1.25 lakhs to Jodhpur. Udaibhan imposed taxes on the people for payment of the above sum. This led to wide spread dissatisfaction in the public. The people assisted by the samants put Udaibhan behind bars.

During the imprisonment of Udaibhan the samants entrusted the administration of Sirohi to his brother Shivsingh. The latter could not handle the situation with courage and determination. There was lawlessness in the State. The Bhils and the Meenas were engaged in plundering the villages. A number of samants of Sirohi transferred their loyalty to the Nawab of Palanpur. Over and above all this, Maharaja Mansingh of Jodhpur was actively engaged in restoring the Sirohi throne to Udaibhan. Shivsingh approached the British East India Company for help. The Company, which always believed in fishing into trouble waters, came to his rescue. The State entered into a treaty with the Company in September 1823 which brought Sirohi under the tutelage of the British.

With the help of the Company, Shivsingh succeeded in crushing the rebellion of Bhils and Meenas. He also brought the recalcitrant samants back to Sirohi's fold. He recovered 312 villages from Palanpur with the intervention of the Company.

### **Temple architecture**

Sirohi is known for temple architecture. Vimalshah, the commander of the Solankis of Gujarat, built the world famous Jain temple 'Vimal Vasahi' dedicated to Adinath in 1031 AD in the village of Dilwara near Abu. Constructed with white marble, brought from Makrana, it is a shining example of Jain architecture. The temple comprises a central shrine, a room with a transept, a large colonnaded area and an ambulatory lined by 52 small shrines housing a statue each. The temple was constructed at a cost of Rs. 18.53 crore and was consecrated by Acharya Vardhaman Suri.

The other Jain temple in the precincts of the Vimalvasahi was built in 1231 AD by two Porwal brothers, Vastupal and Tejpal, ministers of Raja Viradhaval of Gujarat. The temple is dedicated to the twenty second Tirthankar, Bhagwan Neminath. The door casings, architraves, pillars and the sculptures of porticos are astonishing in their workmanship. The most striking feature of this temple is the marble pendent in the dome of the porch. It drops from the ceiling like an enchanting cluster of half open lotuses with cups so finely carved that they appear to be transparent. The chief architect of the temple was Shobhandeo.

The Achalgarh fort was originally built by Parmar rulers. It was repaired by Maharana Kumbha in 1450. It is interesting that even in this fort there are two temples dedicated to Rishabhdeo and Parshnath. It shows that the Jains commanded a lot of influence in the State during the 15th century.

## **(12) AJMER**

The battle of Tarain in 1192 was a watershed in Indian history. It was here that the last Hindu emperor, Prithviraj Chauhan of Ajmer, lost to Sultan Shahabuddin Mohammad Ghorī. His brother, Hariraj, made efforts to retrieve the situation but of no avail. Ajmer finally slipped from the hands of the Chauhans in 1195 to Kutubbuddin Aibak who inherited the Indian conquests of Ghorī. Ajmer remained more or less in the possession of the Sultans of Delhi till the end of the 14th century A.D. As the Delhi Sultanate became weak, Rana Lakha of Mewar

occupied Ajmer in the early part of the 15th century. Mahmood Khilji, the Sultan of Mandu, wrested it from Mewar in 1455. Prince Prithviraj of Mewar attacked Taragarh in 1505 and restored Ajmer to Mewar. In 1553 Bahadurshah of Gujarat captured Ajmer. Later it changed into several hands till Mughal emperor Akbar's general, Kasim Khan, occupied it in 1556 AD.

Akbar took great interest in Ajmer. He built the city wall, the Dargah Bazar and the Magazine. He visited Ajmer practically every year. He made the town the headquarters of the suba of the same name. The suba consisted of 7 sirkars and 197 parganas with a total revenue of Rs 72 lakhs. It was mostly from Ajmer that Akbar conducted his operations in Mewar and Gujarat. In 1570 Akbar came to Ajmer (partly on foot) as a pilgrim to the shrine of Khwaja Moinuddin Chisti consequent to the birth of Salim (Jahangir). Earlier Akbar had made a prayer to the Khawaja to bestow him a son.

Jahangir succeeded Akbar in 1605. He made Ajmer the base of his operations against Maharana Amarsingh I of Mewar. He stayed personally at Ajmer for this purpose for about three years from 1613 to 1616. His grandson Dara was born here in 1615. Sir Thomas Roe came to Ajmer as ambassador of King James I of England and presented his credentials to the Mughal emperor on Jan. 16, 1615. Jahangir granted permission to the East India Company to carry on trade in certain parts of India little knowing that he was sowing the seeds of the British rule in India at the cost of his own dynasty. Jahangir laid out the Daulatabad gardens near Anasagar and built a palace named Chasma-e-Noor.

Shahjahan succeeded Jahangir in 1627. He constructed five marble pavellions and apartments for the royal ladies on the Anasagar embankment. At that time the revenue of Ajmer suba was Rs 1.5 crore according to "Shahjahan Nama". In the war of succession amongst the sons of Shahjahan, who fell seriously ill in 1671, Ajmer remained the theater of a battle for three days in March 1659. Here Aurangzeb defeated Dara and captured the fort of Taragarh.

While Aurangzeb was at Ajmer in connection with his military campaigns against Mewar and Marwar, his son prince Akbar declared himself emperor with the support of the rulers of Mewar and Marwar. The prince accompanied by the forces of the two States marched towards Ajmer against his father Aurangzeb who was in no position to defend himself against the combined armies of prince Akbar and his allies. The

emperor, however, succeeded in creating bad blood between the prince and the Rajputs. The Rajput army quietly left the camp while the prince was sleeping. The officers of the Mughal army, commanded by the prince surrendered, to the emperor. The prince himself fled to the south and from there to Persia. During Aurangzeb's rule the revenue of the suba of Ajmer was Rs 2.9 crore.

With the death of Aurangzeb in 1707 the foundation of the Mughal empire had started shaking. Taking advantage of the situation Maharaja Ajitsingh of Jodhpur occupied Ajmer in 1719. In 1721 Ajmer fell back in the hands of the Mughals. In 1730 Maharaja Abhay Singh of Marwar was appointed subedar of Ajmer but a year later the suba was placed under S. Jaisingh of Jaipur. It appears that Ajmer remained in his possession till his death in 1743, when it was again occupied by Marwar. It remained with the Rathores till 1756. Later on the Marahata ruler Jaiappa Sindhia assisted by Jaipur and Ramsingh, a pretender to the Jodhpur throne, occupied it. In 1787 Marwar forces captured it after defeating the Marahata subedar Anwarbeg. In 1791 AD Marwar ceded Ajmer to the Marahatas. In June 1818 Daulat Ram Sindhia handed over Ajmer to the East India Company by virtue of a treaty.

### **Architecture.**

Ajmer enjoyed immense prosperity during earlier part of the Mughal rule. It was virtually the second capital of India during this period. Akbar built a fortified palace on the bank of the Anasagar lake in 1575. Jahangir, Shahjahan and Aurangzeb resided in this palace whenever they visited Ajmer. The building is rectangular in shape, its four facades being alike in all details. The lofty square pillars of the varandha, which occur in the centre of each facade, and the heavy cut-stone chhajja with its massive ornamental brackets are the main features of this building. It was converted into an arsenal by the Britishers in 1863 A.D. and from thereon the building is known as Magazine. In 1908 A.D. the Rajputana Museum was housed in this building and the arsenal shifted elsewhere.

### **Centre of pilgrimage**

Ajmer has been known since ages for its Puskar lake. Its origin is shrouded in Indian mythology. Its reference is found in the Padam Puran, the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. It is a place of pilgrimage for Hindus since time immemorial. Thousands of pilgrims continue to visit Pushkar to have bath in the sacred lake.

In medieval times Ajmer also became a great centre of pilgrimage for Muslims because of the Dargah of Khawja Moinuddin Chisti. The Khawja was born in 1143 AD in the village of Sijiz in Afghanistan. He became a disciple of Khwaja Usman Chisti and came to India along with Sultan Shabuddin Ghorī. The Khwaja died at Ajmer in March 1236 at the age of 93. On his death his remains were interred in a cell in which he lived. He was forgotten for nearly 250 years. Sultan Ghiyasuddin Khilji of Mandu, who conquered Ajmer in 1455, built a pucca tomb and a small dome over it in 1464. Later on the Mughal emperor Akbar built the magnificent Akbari Masjid in the compound of the Dargah and came to visit the shrine practically every year. This obviously gave immense popularity to the shrine. Shahjahan built the present dome and the Jama Masjid in marble. He added a gate-way for the 'nakar-khana' which enhanced the beauty of the Dargah complex.

The main entrance of the Dargah is a small gateway built by Shahjahan. The two nakkaras (drums) which originally belonged to the army of the famous Daudkhan of Bengal are kept here. They were presented by Akbar to the Dargah. The Akbari Masjid which is 140 × 140 feet, reminds one the magnificent mosque of Fatehpur- Sikri. The next important site in the complex is the Buland Darwaja which is 75 feet high. It is said that originally the gate and the chhatris built over it formed part of an old Jain temple which was demolished. They were raised higher and arched by the Khiljis in the 15th century. From the courtyard of the Durgah two small gateways lead to the inner court wherein situated are the Khawaja's mausoleum and the Jama Masjid. The Masjid, built by Shahjahan in 1638 at a cost of Rs 2.40 lakhs, is of white marble. The screen wall of the mosque has 11 pointed arches of uniform height. Inside the Imamgarh there are 5 arches in which the 'Kalma' is inscribed in letters of gold. The Urs on the death anniversary of Khawja is celebrated at the Dargah for six days every year. Thousands of pilgrims from all over the world, specially from the Islamic countries, visit Ajmer to pay obeisance to the Khawaja.

### **(13) BHARATPUR STATE**

#### **The rise of Jats.**

The Jat power in Rajasthan emerged during the period 1660-70 when Mughal emperor Aurangzeb ruled over India. Gokula, an influential Jat Jamindar (land-lord) of Tilpat, became the leader of Jats,

Gujars and Ahirs in the region. The communities refused to pay land revenue to the Mughals at his instance. The emperor decided to deal their defiance firmly. Gokula organised an army of 20,000 men and fought against the Mughals. The Jats were defeated and 5000 of them were killed. Gokula and members of his family were arrested. The son and the daughter of Gokula were converted to Islam. Gokula and his uncle Uday Singh were cut to pieces on their refusal to embrace Islam. A number of Jat villages including Sinsini, from where Gokula hailed, were occupied by the Mughals.

Khan Chand, a scion of Gokula's family, assumed the leadership of the Sinsiniwar Jats. His place was taken by his grand son Rajaram after sometime. Rajaram reorganised the Jats into a guerrilla force, built small fortresses in the Chambal ravines and started plundering the neighbouring Mughal territory. In 1668 Rajaram and his followers raided Akbar's tomb at Sikandara. He virtually destroyed it and took away jewellery and golden and silver sheets of the shutters of the tomb. Rajaram thus avenged the murder of his ancestor, Gokula, by the Mughals. He was, however, shot dead in July 1668 by a Mughal soldier at Baijal.

When Aurangzeb heard about the destruction of Akbar's tomb, he sent an expedition under Raja Bishan Singh of Amber to punish the Jats. Bishan Singh defeated the Jats and occupied a number of their strongholds. Hundreds of Jats were killed. Chudaman, a young member of Rajaram's family, however, escaped to safety.

In due course Chudaman organised a small unit of daring horsemen and created havoc on the imperial highways between Delhi and Mathura and Agra and Dholpur and collected booty from the travellers. Gradually he built up an army of 10,000 men. He plundered the territories of Kota and Bundi. In 1705, he made Thun his head-quarters and built a strong fortress there.

During the war of succession between Mauzam and Azam, in July 1707 at Jajaw, Chudaman plundered armies on both sides and collected rich booty. Mauzam, who succeeded Aurangzeb in the name of Bahadur Shah-I, granted Chudaman a mansab of 1500 jat and 500 sawar. On Bahadurshah's death, another war of succession for the Mughal throne took place in January 1713 between Farrukhsiyar and Jahandar Shah. Chudaman repeated his feat at Jajaw and relieved the rival armies of their valuables.

When Farrukhsiyar became emperor, he entrusted Chudaman with the task of 'supervising' the imperial highway from Delhi to the Chambal ghat. He imposed road tax which he charged from travellers with vengeance. Farruksiyar was upset with the activities of Chudaman. He asked Sawai Jaisingh of Amber to lead an expedition against Chudaman. Jaisingh surrounded the Thun fort. The siege continued for 20 months but without success. In the meanwhile Chudaman succeeded in negotiating peace directly with the Saiyad brothers. Chudaman agreed to pay Rs 50 lakhs to the emperor. Consequently, Farrukhsiyar ordered the lifting of the siege of Thun over the head S.Jaisingh. Disappointed as he was, Jaisingh returned to Jaipur.

On the assassination of Farrukhsiyar, a battle took place at Hodel in 1720 between the two claimants to the Mughal throne, namely Mohammad Shah and Nekusiyar. Chudaman again looted the camps of the rivals and collected cash and articles worth Rs 60 lakhs. He established friendship with Maharaja Ajit Singh of Jodhpur to counter the threat from S.Jaisingh.

At this crucial stage, the Jats split into two groups, one headed by Chudaman and his son Mokham Singh and the other by his nephew Badan Singh who lived at Sinsini and had close contacts with S.Jai Singh. Chudaman arrested Badan Singh and his supporter Roop Singh and brought them to Thun. Both of them had, however, to be released when the Jats threatened to boycott the marriage of Mokham Singh.

Badan Singh went to Amber and sought the help of S.Jai Singh. The Amber army accompanied by Badan Singh marched towards Thun. Chudaman committed suicide in October 1722 because of some family feud even before the Amber army reached Thun. In the meanwhile S.Jaisingh was appointed as subedar of Agra. He set out with a big force to reinforce his army at Thun. He captured the fort in November, 1722. According to Jadu Nath Sarkar, "The city of Thun was ploughed by asses to make it an accursed soil, unfit to serve as a seat of royalty"<sup>1</sup>. Mokham Singh fled to Jodhpur where Maharaja Ajit Singh gave him shelter.

### **Founding of Jat State.**

S.Jai Singh appointed Badan Singh as successor to Chudaman. He conferred on him the jagir of Deeg and the title of 'Brij Raj'. Henceforth Badan Singh regarded himself as a feudatory of Amber and undertook to pay 'khiraj' to S.Jai Singh.

1. K Natwar Singh. Maharaja Surajmal (1981), p.19

In 1730, Jaisingh asked Badan Singh to crush the Meos who had been a constant headache to the Mughal empire. Badan Singh sent his forces under the command of his valiant 'gelad' son<sup>1</sup> Suraj Mal to deal with the Meos who lived in the hilly tracts of Mewat. Surajmal succeeded in disciplining the Meos. Jaisingh put Mewat under Badan Singh. The territory brought him an annual income of Rs 18 lakhs. Jaisingh also entrusted to him the task of patrolling the highways between Delhi and Agra and Delhi and Jaipur and authorised him to collect toll from the travellers. Badan Singh started construction of the Deeg palace complex in 1725.

In 1732, Badan Singh deputed Surajmal to capture the *jainindari* of Soghar which the latter did in a thorough manner. Surajmal immediately started construction of a fort near Soghar. The fort was later on known as Bharatpur which was made the capital of Bharatpur State. Surajmal also built forts at Kumbher and Weir. By now Badan Singh's eye sight had begun to fail. Surajmal thus became the de-facto ruler of the Jat territory. According to Father Wendel, Badan Singh had as many as 150 wives, "some acquired by means of formal engagement, others simply seized by force"<sup>2</sup>.

### **The Jats & the Mughals.**

In 1749, the Mughal army under Mir Bakshi Salabat Jung ravaged Mewat and captured the fort of Neemrana. Finally the clash took place between the Mughals and the Jats at Sarai Sobhachand. The Mughals sustained heavy losses in men and material. Salabat Jung sued for peace but the only tangible concession Surajmal got from Mir Bakshi as a token of his victory was that the Imperial Government would not permit the cutting down of 'peepal' trees.

In 1751, the emperor formally recognised Badan Singh as ruler of Bharatpur and conferred suitable *mansab* and the hereditary title of Raja on him. He also appointed Surajmal as *faujdar* of Mathura. This was done on the advice of Surajmal's new found patron, Wazir Safdarjung.

In 1753, the emperor dismissed Safdarjung as Wazir and confiscated his jagir. Safdarjung laid siege to Delhi and requested Surajmal to rush to his help. Surajmal reached the imperial capital with

1. If a widow remarries and joins her new husband alongwith the child from her former husband, the child is known as 'gelad' in the new family.

2. K.Natwar Singh, Op. Cit., p.28



a large army and looted it racklessly for weeks. The loot was remembered for years by the citizens of Delhi as 'Jat gardi'. In the meanwhile Rohillas rushed to the help of the emperor. This compelled Safdarjung to sue for peace. Safdarjung received his jagir back but lost the office of Wazir. The only gainer in the whole affair was Surajmal who amassed a huge wealth collected from the hapless citizens of Delhi.

In 1754, Surajmal had to face the invasion of the Marahatas under Peshwa Raghunath Rao. He entrusted the defense of Deeg to his son Jawahar Singh and himself shifted to the fort of Kumher which was well provided with arms and ammunitions and provision. The Peshawa laid the siege to Kumher and cut off all approaches to the town. The siege made no impression on Surajmal who was well entrenched in the fort.

Soon the Mughal army under Mir Bakshi Imad-ul-Mulk accompanied by Khanderao Holkar and the Jaipur forces joined Raghunath Rao at Kumher. Surajmal started feeling the pinch of the four month long siege. He made peace with the Maharahatas and agreed to pay Rs 30 lakhs. The Peshwa left for home. Malhar Rao and Imad returned to Delhi and had the emperor murdered. Imad put Prince Aziz-ud-din on the throne as Alamgir II and had himself appointed as Wazir. In the unsettled conditions at Delhi, Surajmal occupied a large part of the province of Agra. He also annexed Palwal, Vallabhgarh and Alwar. This offended the new Wazir. He sent an expedition against Surajmal. The Mughal commander Najib Khan reached settlement with Surajmal. The latter was allowed to retain the land in Aligarh district but made to vacate Sikandarabad.

### **Abdali's invasion**

In June 1747 Ahmad Shah Abdali succeeded Nadir Shah as Afghan King. In 1756 he conquered Punjab and entered Delhi. Having humbled the emperor in January 1757, he proceeded towards Bharatpur for extorting money from Surajmal, who was considered a very rich man. He defeated Jawahar Singh and captured Vallabhgarh. He carried out a general massacre in the town. The forces of Abdali devastated Mathura and Agra too. While Abdali was preparing to attack Bharatpur, cholera broke out and one hundred of his men started dying every day. He wound up his campaign and returned to Delhi and from there to Afghanistan. Surajmal thus escaped the fury of Abdali. In January 1760, Abdali set

out for India again. The Wazir, Imad-ul-mulk, took shelter in Bharatpur. Abdali warned Surajmal that he would devastate Deeg unless he paid him Rs 2 crore. Surajmal agreed to pay Rs 40 lakhs to the Afghan king and saved his principality from the Abdali hoards.

### **Zenith of Jat power.**

In the meanwhile the Marahatas under Sadashiv Bhao joined hands with Surajmal. The Marahatas and the Jats along with Imad reached Delhi and occupied it on August 3, 1760. They appointed Imad as Wazir and placed Aurangzeb's great grand son Mohi-ul- Millat on the throne in the name of Shahjahan-II. Unfortunately differences arose between Bhao and Surajmal. Surajmal wanted to retain control over Delhi which Bhao resented. A disappointed Surajmal returned to Bharatpur.

Abdali took the advantage of the differences between the Marahatas and the Jats. He defeated the Marahatas in the third battle of Panipat on January 14, 1761. Bhao himself was killed. The remnants of his army reached Bharatpur. Surajmal ensured their safe return to Gwalior. Abdali was annoyed with Surajmal and threatened to attack Bharatpur. Surajmal expressed his regrets and paid Rs 1 lakh to Abdali. The Afghan King returned to his country in May 1761.

Abdali's second invasion had shaken practically every power in north India. Shah Alam II was emperor only in name. The Marahatas had been defeated at Panipat. The Rohillas were exhausted. Nawab Sujja-Ud-dolla had been facing problems from the East India Company which was fast encroaching upon his territory. The only man of consequence who remained unscathed in north India was Surajmal. He exploited the situation and invaded the Red Fort at Agra and captured it without any blood-shed. A bribe of Rs one lakh to the keeper was sufficient to enter the fort. Surajmal collected an amount of Rs one crore from the fort. He also took away with him guns, gold and silver howdas and precious stones. He incorporated Haryana in his territory. His sons Jawahar Singh and Naharsingh captured Rewari, Jajjhar, Rohtak and Farrukhnagar. In December 1763, the Rohilla chief Najib Khan clashed with Surajmal's forces on the banks of the river Hindan, a tributary to the Jamuna. In a fierce battle that ensued on December 25, Surajmal was killed.

Surajmal's contribution to the Jat principality was enormous. He was ruthless and at the same time calculative. When he took charge of the affairs of the State in the lifetime of his father, he had only Sinsini and Thun under his control. At the time of his death at a rather early age of 56 his possession extended to Agra, Aligarh, Merath, Mathura, Farrukhnagar, Mewat, Rewari etc.

Surajmal had amassed huge wealth. Some even estimated that it was as much as Rs 9 crore. Surajmal's greatest achievement, however, was in welding the warring Jat factions into a powerful community. At a critical juncture when conditions in the entire north India were unsettled, the Jat kingdom basked in Surajmal's glory.

Surajmal had five sons, namely, Jawaharsingh, Ratansingh, Naharsingh, Navalsingh and Ranjeetsingh. He had nominated Naharsingh as his heir apparent during his life time. Most of the members of the ruling family and the Jat elite, therefore, decided to put Naharsingh on the throne on the death of Surajmal. Jawaharsingh, who was at Farrukhnagar, rushed to Deeg. Naharsingh fled to Dholpur and waited for an appropriate opportunity to strike back. Jawaharsingh declared himself as the ruler of Bharatpur. His main supporter in the ruling family was his stepmother Rani Kishori who had adopted him.

#### **Jawaharsingh's campaign.**

Jawaharsingh's first priority was to take revenge against Najib for the murder of his father Surajmal. It was in fact a tactical move to win the confidence of Jats. The Jat leaders, however, did not rally behind him. The Prime Minister Balram had closed the gates of Bharatpur fort and deprived him of the State treasury. Jawaharsingh had thus neither men nor money to fight a powerful foe. Rani Kishori came to his rescue at this critical juncture. She placed necessary funds at his disposal to punish Najib. Jawaharsingh dismantled the traditional Jat force and recruited mercenary soldiers under Sumru and Rene Mad. He also succeeded in enlisting the support of the Marahatas and the Sikhs.

In 1764, Jawaharsingh led an expedition against Najib and defeated him at Faridabad, a few miles away from Delhi. He plundered Delhi for days together. In the meanwhile Najib succeeded in securing the defection of the Marahata leader Malhar Rao Holkar. Jawaharsingh had to leave Delhi. He, however, carried with him not only cash and valuables but also 'Asthdhatu' gates and a marble 'throne'. He erected the gates on the northern entrance of Bharatpur and placed the throne at

the sprawling complex of the Deeg palace symbolising the victory of Jats over Delhi.

Malhar Rao Holkar joined hands with Naharsingh and attacked Bharatpur. Jawaharsingh defeated them. Soon thereafter Holkar and Naharsingh died. The challenge from Naharsingh thus came to an end. In 1767 Jawaharsingh started making inroads into the Marahata territory. He captured Bhador, Kachwardhar, Sikarwar, Khatoli etc. The Peshwa sued for peace. Jawaharsingh returned to Bharatpur but retained the control of the territory captured by him.

Blushed with his military victories against Najib and the Marahatas, Jawaharsingh diverted his attention towards Jaipur which had given shelter and material help to his erst-while enemy, Naharsingh. Jawaharsingh looted several villages of Jaipur while on his way to Pushkar. Maharaja Madhosingh decided to take on him. The Jaipur army attacked Jawaharsingh when he was returning from Pushkar. At the battle of Mavanda on December 14, 1767 the Kachhavas gave a crushing blow to Jawaharsingh's army. It was with some difficulty that Jawahar Singh himself could be taken to safety.

A battered Jawaharsingh now started reorganising his forces. He recruited some Sikhs in his army and attacked the Marahata territory. He returned from Bhind leaving his army there to continue the operations. He was, however, murdered in August, 1768 at Agra. His brother Ratansingh succeeded him. Ratansingh was murdered just after 13 months at Varindban as he tried to seduce the daughter of Goswami Roopanand.

Kesarisingh, one and half year old son of Ratansingh, was declared as ruler of Bharatpur. Dhanshah, the commander of the Jat forces, was appointed as the regent of the child ruler. Nawalsingh and Ranjeetsingh, the uncles of Kesarisingh, resented the appointment of Dhanshan and removed him. Having done so, each of them wanted to become the regent of the young prince. Naval Singh succeeded in winning over the Jat leaders and became regent.

Ranjeetsingh went away to Jaipur. He invited the Marahatas to attack Bharatpur. The trigger happy Marahatas led an expedition against Naval Singh. The latter paid Rs 65 lakhs to the Marahatas and granted a jagir of Rs 20 lakh to Ranjeetsingh.

In 1772 Shah Alam's Wazir, Najaf Khan, attacked Bharatpur. He defeated Navalsingh and captured several parganas. Naval Singh fled to Barasana. Najaf Khan captured the Barsana fort and later on Agra too. Navalsingh took shelter in the Deeg fort. Taking advantage of the situation Rao Pratapsingh Naruka of Macheri occupied Mewat. In 1775 he also captured Alwar. A new State of Alwar thus emerged. Navalsingh regrouped his army and attacked Najaf Khan's forces. He was, however, again defeated. Navalsingh took shelter in the fort of Sokher. Najaf Khan followed him. Navalsingh fled to Deeg where he died on August 11, 1775. A sad chapter in Bharatpur's history was closed.

On the death of Navalsingh, Rahimdad Khan, a supporter of Najaf Khan, occupied Deeg. He put the minor prince Kesari Singh again on the throne and declared himself as regent. Ranjeetsingh, who was in Kumber, collected an army of Jats, Marahatas and Nagas and entered the fort of Deeg compelling Rahimdad Khan and his Ruhilla supporters to leave the fort. Now the power struggle started between the supporters of Ranjeetsingh and Kesarisingh. Finally, good sense prevailed on both sides. Ranjeetsingh was declared as ruler of Bharatpur. Kasarisingh died of small pox after some time.

In his efforts to recover the territory lost to the Mughals, Ranjeetsingh started plundering the region around Agra and Mathura. Najaf Khan marched to Deeg and laid the siege to the fort. He captured it in April 1776. Ranjeetsingh and his supporters took shelter in Kumber. He started campaign in the Agra region. Najaf Khan rushed to Bharatpur and captured Kumber. Ranjeetsingh and his mother Rani Kishori fled to Bharatpur, which was now the last jat bastion. Najaf Khan followed them. The Jats surrendered. On the request of Rani Kishori, Najaf Khan allowed Ranjeet Singh to retain the forts of Bharatpur and Kumber along with a jagir of Rs 8 lakhs.

In April 1782 Najaf Khan died. The Mughal empire was now in the throws of uncertainty. Ranjeetsingh exploited the situation and extended his sway over some more territory. In 1784, Mahadaji Sindhia occupied the Jat State. Rani Kishori again played her part. She met Sindhia at Tarsi in January 1785 and succeeded in the return of Jagir worth Rs 10 lakhs to Ranjeet Singh. The latter participated in the campaign of Sindhia against Mohammad Beg Hamdani, Ishmeil Beg and the ruler of Jaipur. For the services rendered by Ranjeetsingh, Sindhia returned to him the fort of Deeg.

In 1803 Gen. Lake of the East India Company defeated Sindhia. Ranjeetsingh said good by to the friendship with the Marahatas and joined hands with the winning horse, Gen. Lake. The strategy paid rich dividend to his State which had almost disintegrated. He entered into a treaty of friendship with the Company on September 29, 1803. He actively assisted Gen. Lake in the capture of Agra fort. The General granted him the parganas of Kishangarh, Kathumar, Rewari, Gokul and Sabad in recognition of the help rendered to him.

In the later part of 1804 the Marahatas were again on the ascendancy. Yashwant Rao Holkar captured Mathura and marched towards Delhi. Holkar won over Ranjeetsingh to his side on the promise of giving him some territory. Gen. Lake, however, defeated the Holker at Delhi. Holkar took shelter at Deeg. Gen. Lake followed him and captured Deeg on December 24, 1804. The Jats led by Ranjeetsingh and the Marahatas left Deeg and entered the fort of Bharatpur.

Amir Khan Pindari rushed to the help of Ranjeetsingh. He made a diversionary move by attacking the British territory of Doab so as to reduce the pressure on Bharatpur. His plan, however, misfired. The British forces defeated Amir Khan. Here at Bharatpur, Gen. Lake successively attacked the fort four times but failed to capture it. Meanwhile the Marahatas were routed and forced to fly across the Chambal.

#### **Treaty with E.I. Company.**

Ranjeetsingh was now all alone in his fight against the mighty British. He, therefore, sought peace with Gen. Lake. A new treaty was signed on May 4, 1805 between Gen. Lake and Ranjeetsingh. The latter had to pay Rs 20 lakhs in consideration of the peace now granted to him. The British Government took upon itself the responsibility of the security of Bharatpur. The Maharaja had to keep one of his sons with the British forces until such time as the British Government was satisfied in regard to the loyalty of Ranjeetsingh. The British also retained the fort of Deeg. Ranjeetsingh died at Goverdhan in December 1805. He was, however, restored the possession of Deeg before his death. He left behind four sons, namely, Randhirsingh, Baldevsingh, Prithvisingh and Laxmansingh.

Randhirsingh succeeded his father as the ruler of Bharatpur. By now his brother Laxmansingh, who was handed over to the British as a hostage, was allowed to return to the State. Randhirsingh remained faithful to the British Government till his death in October 1823.

### **The architecture**

As we have seen the Jat rulers of Bharatpur had amassed considerable wealth by fair or foul means. They invested a part of their wealth in the construction of forts, palaces and gardens.

The State enjoyed peace and prosperity during the life time of Badansingh under the protective umbrella of S.Jaisingh of Amber (Jaipur). Badansingh was a great builder. He appointed Jeevanram Banchari as his minister in charge of public works. The construction of buildings at Deeg, Bharatpur, Kumher and Weir was started under his supervision. One thousand bullock carts, 200 horse carriages, 1500 camel carts and 500 mules were employed to carry marble from Bansi Paharpur and stone from Baratha to these places. Twenty thousand men and women worked round the clock for a quarter of a century on these works.

At Deeg the main palace Gopal Bhavan was completed by 1745. The palace had 'Deewan-e-am' built with sand stone. An exquisite marble swing stood in front of the palace. This swing (hindola) was brought from Delhi by Surajmal. Writing about the Deeg palaces and grandens, Thornton stated in the gazetteer of India that they surpassed only by Tajmahal at Agra in elegance and perfection of workmanship.

The work on Bharatpur fort was started in 1732 after Surajmal had captured Soghar. The additions and alterations in the fort continued for more than a century. It became one of most formidable and impregnable forts of India. Even General Lake's forces armed with modern weapons could not penetrate its defenses for months.

The outer ditch of the Bharatpur fort was nearly 250 feet wide and 500 feet deep. A twentyfive feet high and 30 feet broad wall was built with mud around the city. The entry and the exit to the city was regulated through ten big gates. There was inner most ring 170 feet wide and 40 feet deep. Two bridges on either side led to the gates of the main fort. The walls were mainly built of mud on which no artillery bombardment could make impact. Inside the fort 8 bastions were erected and big cannons were placed on them for the defence of the fort. While the fort architecture employed at Bharatpur, Deeg, Kumber and elsewhere was wholly indigenous, the palaces built at various places reflected of the combination of the Mughal and the Rajput architecture. These palaces were constructed by builders from Agra and Delhi who were brought by Badansingh and Surajmal.

### **The Jat society**

Polygamy and widow marriage were prevalent amongst the Jats. Divorce was permissible in the society. Even inter-caste marriage was not taboo. Maharaj Surajmal himself had a Kurmi and a Malin as his wives. Jawaharsingh, who succeeded Surajmal as ruler of Bharatpur, was from the Kurmi wife.

The law of primogeniture was followed by the ruling family of Bharatpur more in breach than in observance. The practice of giving jagirs to the kinsmen of the ruling family was followed in Bharatpur too. The earlier Jat rulers had consolidated the State with the army consisting of Jats only who were excellent horsemen. It was Jawaharsingh who disintegrated the traditional Jat force and replaced it by professional and mercenary soldiers as the various Jat factions started challenging the authority of Jawaharsingh as ruler of Bharatpur.

### **The economy**

Not much information is available about the general economy of the State of Bharatpur prior to the British rule in India. One of the reasons was that the State saw frequent territorial changes in its complexion. Earlier the Jat warriors survived on loot and plunder of the Mughal convoys to and fro Delhi. They also robbed the travellers on the highways passing through the territory commanded by them. Side by side they cultivated land. The main crops grown in the State were bajra, jowar, gram, barley, wheat, cotton, and oilseeds. The State exported oilseeds, cotton, ghee and sand stone to the neighbouring towns of Agra, Mathura and Hatharas. The main imports included rice and sugar from U.P. and salt from Sambhar. The area enjoyed fairly regular rainfall and was thus most secure against famine and scarcity.



## CHAPTER 10

### BRITISH SET-UP IN RAJASTHAN

The East India Company's activities in India were earlier confined to British interests in trading in and around the territories in which the British possessed settlements. The EIC followed the policy of non-involvement in the affairs of the princely States. It was in the beginning of the 19th century that this policy was reversed. The then Governor General, Lord Wellesley, laid down his guiding principles that "The British must be number one paramount power in India and that the native princes could only retain their personal insignia of sovereignty by surrendering their political independence." In Rajasthan the States of Alwar, Bharatpur and Karauli were the first victims of this policy.

The "subsidiary system" introduced by Wellesley found full expression in the settlements made by his successor, Marquis of Hastings. By the end of 1818 the rest of the princely States of Rajasthan, except Sirohi, had entered into treaties and engagements of "subordinate cooperation". Sirohi followed suit in 1823. The treaties guaranteed protection to the States against external aggression and internal revolt. The States on their part accepted the supremacy and overlordship of the British.

In 1848 Lord Dalhousie enunciated the "doctrine of lapses" which enabled the EIC to annex the States of Satara, Nagpur and Jhansi as their rulers died without male heirs. Though the princes resented this policy, the rulers of practically all the States in Rajasthan stood by the British during the Mutiny of 1857. In 1858, when the Mutiny collapsed, the British Government assumed the governance of India directly. In 1862 the British Government acknowledged the rulers' right of adoption. Though the doctrine of lapses was buried knee-deep, the British ingenuity developed the principle of paramountcy opening the flood gates of British interference in the internal affairs of the States notwithstanding the provisions of treaties and engagements to the contrary.

Ajmer-Merwara came into the British possession in 1818 by virtue of the treaty with Sindhia. Following in the footprints of the Mughals, the British made Ajmer as head-quarters of the A.G.G. (Agent to the Governor General) for Rajputana to exercise control over the Rajasthan States. The Rajputana Agency, consisting of 23 States and two Chiefships, was divided into four groups, viz., (1) Eastern Rajputana States Agency comprising Bharatpur, Dholpur, Karauli, Kota, Bundi and Jhalawar, (2) Jaipur Agency comprising Jaipur, Alwar, Kishangarh, Shahpura and Tonk and the Chiefship of Lawa, (3) Mewar and Southern Rajputana States Agency consisting of Mewar, Dungarpur, Banswara, Pratapgarh, Idar and Vijaynagar and the Chiefship of Kushalgarh and (4) Western Rajputana States Agency consisting of Jodhpur, Bikaner, Jaisalmer, Sirohi, Palanpur and Danta. Each of these regional agencies was headed by a Political Agent who functioned under the over all control of the A.G.G. The headquarters of the A.G.G. were later on shifted from Ajmer to Mount Abu.

The control of the four States of Idar, Vijaynagar, Palanpur and Danta was transferred from Rajputana Agency to Gujrat and Kathiawad States Agency soon after independance. By 1949 the princely order was abolished and the Rajputana States were integrated into a united state of Rajasthan. The offices of A.G.G., Political Agents, Residents etc. were wound up.

## CHAPTER 11

# RAJASTHAN IN THE BRITISH PERIOD

(1818 to 1947)

### 1. Udaipur (Mewar)

#### History

On the death of Maharana Bhimsingh on March 30, 1828 his son Jawan Singh ascended the Mewar throne. The new Maharana inherited a bankrupt treasury. In January 1832 the Maharana accompanied by a retinue of about 10,000 persons went to Ajmer to attend the darbar of the Governor-General, Lord William Bentick, much against the wishes of a number of his samants who reminded him that none of his ancestors had ever attended the court of even the mighty Mughal emperors while the Governor General was a mere representative of the British Emperor. The Maharana breathed his last in 1838 without an heir.

There were two claimants to the throne, namely, Sardar Singh and Sardulsingh, a son and a cousin of Maharaj Shivdan Singh of Bagor respectively. The samants and mutsaddies were divided on the question of successor and it was after five day long parleys amongst them that Sardarsingh was put on the throne. The East India Company (EIC) approved the succession. Sardarsingh started taking revenge against those who favoured Sardulsingh. He confiscated the jagir of Gogunda and put Pradhan Mehta Shersingh behind bars. Shersingh later on escaped to Marwar. His cousin Motiram committed suicide while in prison. Maharana's other victims were Purohit Shyamnath, Kayast Kishnnath and Mehta Ganeshdas who were sent to jail. The Maharana released them only when they paid a huge amount to him. He appointed Mehta Ramsingh as Pradhan in place of Shersingh.

In 1839 the Bhils and Grasias of Bhomat rose in revolt and killed about 150 army men. The Maharana had to establish a garrison at Kherwara to keep the Bhils under control. The same year an agreement

was signed between the Maharana and his samants regarding the latter's powers and obligations. Since the Maharana had no male issue he adopted his brother Swaroop Singh with the approval of the East India Company. He died on July 14, 1842. Lachubai, a pashwan, committed sati with him.

Swaroopsingh continued Mehta Ramsingh as Pradhan and Rawat Dulesingh of Asind as Musahib. He, however, appointed Kunwar Kesarisingh of Salumber as his advisor. There were now three parallel centres of power. This gave rise to court intrigues. Ultimately, Mehta Ramsingh succeeded in ousting both Dulesingh and Kesarisingh. He became so powerful that the Maharana started addressing him as 'Kakaji' (uncle). He even avoided rendering accounts of the State revenue to the Maharana in spite of his specific instructions. An annoyed Maharana put Ramsingh and his family in the jail and appointed Mehta Shersingh in his place. In 1845 the Maharana gave up drinking. It is interesting to note that the House of Shishodias was not given to drinking originally. It was only in 1668 that Maharana Amarsingh II introduced it.

The fickle minded Maharana released Ramsingh from jail after a few months and appointed him as his advisor. The court was now divided into two groups, one led by Mehta Shersingh and the other by Mehta Ramsingh. In 1847 a rumour became current that Shardulsingh, a pretender to the throne, was conspiring to poison the Maharana in league with Mehta Ramsingh and several others. A witch hunt started soon. Ramsingh quietly left Mewar and took shelter in a British cantonment at Beawar, where he died sometime later. The members of his family were exiled from Mewar and all his property was confiscated. In a stone inscription it was stated that Mehta Ramsingh and his successors would not be appointed on any posts in the State.<sup>1</sup>

In 1854 the A.G.G., Sir Henry Lawrence, made a complaint to the Maharana that the Meenas of Jahazpur were engaged in loot and plunder in Ajmer-Merwara. The Maharana entrusted the task of suppressing the Meenas to Mehta Ajitsingh. The latter dealt the Meenas with a heavy hand. He captured their strongholds, destroyed their shelters and beheaded quite a few of them. About 4000 Meenas regrouped themselves in the hills of Manohargarh and Deo-ka-Khera. The Mewar

1. It was after two generations that the family returned to Mewar. Jeewan singh Mehta was appointed as Hakim. His two sons Tejsingh & Dr. Mohansingh Mehta became Ministers during Maharana Bhupalsingh's reign.

forces gunned down some of them. Meanwhile 5000 Meenas from the neighbouring States of Jaipur, Tonk and Bundi joined hands with the Meenas of Jahazpur. The Meenas surrounded the Mewar army and started attacking them with arrows. Ultimately a Jagirdar succeeded in persuading the Meenas for a ceasefire but not before the Meenas had killed hundreds of soldiers and samants.

When the Maharana heard the news, he was upset. He sent additional forces against the Meenas. At the instance of the A.G.G. the rulers of Jaipur, Tonk and Bundi also sent their forces in aid of the Mewar army. The Meenas surrendered. Next year an army cantonment was established at Deoli with a view to keep an eye on the activities of the Meenas.<sup>1</sup>

In 1855 the Bhils of Udaipur district revolted against the government. The State army crushed them ruthlessly. It burnt various Bhil villages, arrested hundreds of Bhils and beheaded some of them.

In May 1857 mutiny broke out at various places in India against the East India Company. Like other Rajasthan princes, the Maharana too extended his help to the Company. He provided shelter to a number of English men, women and children. He sent his army to Neemuch and Nimbaheda to crush the mutineers. The Mewar army captured Nimbaheda which was part of the territory of the Nawab of Tonk. The Marahata leader Tantiya Tope, one of the leading lights of the mutiny, entered Mewar with his forces. He had lot of expectations from the people of Mewar in his fight against the British. He, however, left the State a disappointed man. Interestingly Tantiya's forces did not cause any damage to Mewar.<sup>2</sup> The mutiny ended in 1858. The British Government assumed the governance of India through the Viceroy. The rule of East India Company was terminated and Queen Victoria became Empress of India.

The Maharana was quite hopeful that Nimbaheda, which originally belonged to Mewar, would be allowed to be retained by him. To his chagrin it was restored to the Nawab of Tonk in February, 1860. The Maharana had to be contented with a 'khillat' as a reward for his services to the British empire during the mutiny.

The relations between the Maharana and his samants remained strained throughout his reign. The bone of contention was 'Chatoond

1. Shyamaldas. Ibid Vol.II. p.1955

2. Shyamaldas. Ibid. p.1977

Chakri'. The Maharana claimed that the samants should pay one-third of the land revenue as khiraj and that 50% of the khiraj should be paid in cash and the rest in the shape of personal services to the Maharana. Negotiations between the Maharana and the samants took place several times in the presence of the A.G.G. but nothing substantial came out and the stalemet continued.

It was during Swaroopsingh's time that the Sati system was officially abolished in Mewar at the instance of the British Government. Initially the Maharana resisted saying that system had been in vogue since ages. Ultimately Queen Victoria and the Secretary of State for India had to intervene in the matter. They wrote to the Maharana in February 1861 that Mewar was the only State in India where Sati was still in vogue and that the barbaric system should be discontinued forthwith. The Maharana issued a notification prohibiting the Sati throughout the State. Incidentally when Swaroopsingh died issueless in 1761 his paswan Aizanbai was compelled to commit 'sati' contrary to the instructions of the British Government.

Swaroopsingh was succeeded by his adopted son Shambhu Singh. Since the latter was still a minor, a regency council was set up with Major Tailor as President. The first act of the regency council was to punish those responsible in the committing of the sati. Mehta Gopaldas was exiled from Mewar and his jagir confiscated. Thakur Khumansingh of Asind was exiled from Udaipur. Kothari Kesarisingh was demoted from the post of Pradhan to the membership of the regency council. Later on he was exiled from the State on charges of embezzlement. The regency council did not function smoothly. Every member of the council was engaged in self aggrandisement. The administration became loose and corrupt.

After some time the council was replaced by a committee known as "Ahliyan Shri Darbar". It was manned by Mehta Gokul Chand and Pandit Laxmanrao. The committee under the guidance of the Political Agent, Col. Eden, wanted to introduce some administrative reforms. This was resented by the public of Udaipur. On March, 30, 1864 the capital observed complete strike. The people led by the "nagar seth" Champalal Bapna went to the Residency shouting slogans against the committee and the Political Agent. From there they went to the Saheli-garden. The Maharana and the Political Agent went to the garden and brought the

people back to the city. The reforms introduced were withdrawn. This was the first major victory of the people against the autocratic regime.

In November 1865 ruling powers were conferred on Maharana Shambhusingh on his becoming major. In December 1867 the Maharana appointed Kothari Kesarisingh as Pradhan. The very next year Mewar faced a severe drought. Arrangements were made for import of foodgrains. The State Government advanced money to the traders for the purpose. A number of works were started to provide relief to the people. Free ration was distributed to hundreds of people at various places. The drought was followed by cholera epidemic which accounted for hundreds of deaths every day. In September 1869 Mewar had a bumper crop. The hungry people started eating which they could hardly digest. Another epidemic followed which claimed thousands of lives.

In 1874 the Maharana fell ill. It was rumoured that Mehta Pannalal, the Secretary of the Mahakma Khas, had 'invoked evil spirits' to harm the Maharana. Mehta was arrested. The charge of Mahakma Khas was given to Mehta Gokulchand and Sahiwala Arjunsingh jointly. The Maharana died in October 1874 without an heir.

Sajjansingh, a scion of the Bagor family, succeeded Shambhusingh. The British Government approved the succession. The new Maharana released Mehta Pannalal from jail but exonerated him from Mewar on the advice of the Political Agent. As the old ministers Mehta Gokulchand and Sahiwala Arjunsingh failed to deliver goods, the Maharana recalled Mehta Pannalal from exile and put him in charge of the Mahakma Khas alongwith Mehta Gokulchand.

In March 1876 the Tilkayat of the Nathdwara temple, Mahant Girdharilal, raised the standard of revolt against the State. The revolt was crushed. The Mahant was arrested and deported to Vrandavan. His son Gordhan Lal was installed as the new Tilkayat of the temple. In January 1877 the Maharana established Ijlas-e-Khash, the highest court of appeal, in judicial matters. It consisted of a number of samants and mutsaddies who served on the body in an honorary capacity.

The Maharana launched a campaign against corruption in the State. He dismissed the Hakim of Sahada, Pandit Raghunathrao and his subordinates and put them behind bars on charges of bribery and mis-appropriation. He took measures against the Pathans of north-west frontier who were engaged in money lending business amongst the Adivasies (tribals). The Pathans exploited and harassed the Bhils in

recovering interest several times of the principal amount. A number of Pathans were arrested and externed from India with the help of the British Government.

There was lawlessness in the capital during those days. The thefts and burglaries were rampant. A number of murders took place every year. Stray animals roamed the streets of Udaipur. The Maharana appointed Maulvi Abdul Rahman Khan as Superintendent of Police to meet the situation. The first step the Maulvi took was to catch the stray animals. The citizens took it otherwise and declared a strike in the city. When all efforts to end the strike failed the Maharana put the leaders in jail. The normalcy in the city was quickly restored.

In October 1881 Lord Rippon, the Governor General of India, invited the Maharana to Calcutta to receive the title of G.C.S.I.<sup>1</sup> The Maharana declined to receive the award. His contention was that he was known as 'Hindua-Surya' (the sun of the Hindus) and that his receiving the 'star' would amount to 'reduction' in his status. It was with great difficulty that the Maharana agreed to receive the decoration provided the Governor General himself came to Chittor. Rippon accordingly came to Chittor on November 22, 1882 and conferred the insignia of G.C.S.I. on the Maharana in the presence of some 50,000 people.

At the time of the death of Maharana Sajjansingh in Dec. 1884 Mehta Pannalal emerged as the most powerful mutsaddi in the State. Thanks to his influence with the political agent and the A.G.G., he successfully manoeuvred the succession of Fatehsingh of Shivarati to the Mewar throne, though the Shishodia families of Bagor and Karjali had better claims.

Fatehsingh's rule, which lasted more than 45 years, was quite eventful. He stopped the interference of the Resident (political agent) in the internal affairs of the State. In 1888 the British Government asked the Maharana to raise a special force for the Imperial defense. The Maharana rejected the proposal. It was not until 1904 when the Governor General, Lord Curzon, visited Udaipur and prevailed upon him to maintain a token force of 150 sawars for the purpose. Even this decision was given effect to in 1911.

The Mewar State had advanced money to Seth Zorawarmal Bapna for running a mail service in the State. Since the Seth failed to render

1 Grand Commander of the Order of the Star of India



accounts in spite of warnings the Maharana attached his jagir and confiscated his opium chests. The resident and the A.G.G. requested the Maharana to reconsider his decision. It only made things worse. The landed property of the seth was taken possession of by the State authorities. The opium and other moveable properties were auctioned. The Seth was brought to his knees. Besides, the two English officers and Mehta Pannalal, who sided with the Seth, were removed from their posts. In view of the strained relations between the Maharana and the resident, Col. Miles, the British Government removed the latter. Miles was so bitter against the Maharana that he wrote to the Political department that if ever another revolt took place in India against the British Government, it would start from Udaipur.

On the removal of Mehta Pannalal, the British authorities insisted that only its nominee should be appointed as Diwan. The Maharana decided not to have any Diwan. In stead, he appointed the well known barrister and revolutionary, Shyamji Krishna Verma, as his advisor and private secretary. Verma was exiled from India in 1897 for his anti-British activities.

The Maharana disciplined the Jagirdars who had been agitating against the State Government on the question of 'Chathoond Chakri' and 'Kalambandi' since the days of the late Maharana. He confiscated the jagir of Kachola in 1894, as Naharsingh, the Rajadhiraj of Shahpura, refused to perform Chakri and failed to attend Maharana's court. The jagir was returned to Naharsingh only after he agreed to attend the Maharana's court for a period of two months every alternate year. Naharsingh also agreed to send his jamiyat (army) to Udaipur for a period of three months in a year. The Maharana resumed the jagir of Asind on the death of its chief, Ranjetsingh, in the absence of a direct descendent of the original grantee.

In 1899 Mewar faced a severe famine. The Maharana started some relief works but they were wholly inadequate. Nearly 7 lakh people lost their lives out of the population of 17 lakhs. Besides, more than half of the cattle perished. This was the biggest famine since 1868.

The Viceroy, Lord Curzon, invited the princes to attend the Darbar to be held at Delhi in January 1903 to celebrate the coronation of the Emperor Edward VII. The Maharana expressed his inability to comply with his wishes. As the British Government attached great importance to the presence of the Maharana at the royal darbar, the message upset

Lord Curzon. He rushed to Udaipur and heaved a sigh of relief when the Maharana agreed to attend the darbar.

The reluctant Maharana left Udaipur for Delhi on Dec. 30, 1902 by a special train. The well known freedom fighter and poet Keshari Singh Bareth submitted a 13 stanza poem known as "Chetawani-ka-Chungatia" to the Maharana during the journey. In his poem Bareth reminded the Maharana of his ancestors who refused to attend the Mughal darbar even at the cost of prolonged wars with the mighty Mughals. The Maharana was moved. He did reach Delhi but returned from there without attending the darbar or even calling on the Viceroy.

Though the British Government tried to keep the Maharana in good humour by conferring title after title, the latter left no opportunity to embrace it. In December 1911, the Maharana went to Delhi on the occasion of the visit of king George V. He simply met the king at Salimgarh railway station and returned to Udaipur without either joining the royal procession or attending the darbar held in honour of the king.

When Vijaysingh Pathik came to Bijolia incognito to lead the famous Kisan movement<sup>1</sup> against the Thikanedar in 1916, there was a warrant for his arrest in the Firozpur conspiracy case. The Ajmer police was also after him since his escape from Tadgarh. He therefore went "underground" and conducted the movement without late or hinderance. The British Government felt that the Maharana was not serious in the arrest of Pathik and the suppression of the Kisan agitation. Ultimately the Maharana had to pay the penalty.

In July 1921, the A.G.G. Mr. Robert Holland wrote to the Maharana on behalf of the Viceroy that the Kishan movement in the State had assumed serious proportions and that it would have dangerous consequences not only for Mewar and other Indian States but also for British India. He advised him to abdicate his throne in favour of his son Bhupalsingh. The Maharana refused to oblige. When the contents of the letter came to light, there was strong reaction among the people and the press of the country against the decision of the Viceroy. The British Government could not, therefore, dethrone him but saw to it that the Maharana surrendered most of his powers to his son. The Maharana died ten years later on May 20, 1930 at a ripe age of 80.

Though Bhupalsingh had formally succeeded the Mewar throne on the death of his father, he had started exercising ruling power's since

1. The Kishan movement of Bijolia has been described in detail in a separate sub chapter

1921 as a result of British intervention. However, he could not do much so long as Maharana Fatesingh lived. Of course he got Pathik arrested to placate the British Government.

In 1931 the Maharana limited the judicial powers of the first class thikanas of the State. The thikana courts could now award maximum sentence of three years imprisonment in criminal cases. On the civil side they could entertain civil suits to the extent of Rs 10,000 only.

### **Kisan Movement**

The credit for one of the longest and the most organised agrarian movements in the history of modern India goes to the pesantry in the jagir of Bijolia. Situated on the south eastern tip of Mewar, the 256 square mile plateau known as Uparmal was held in jagir by the Parmar Rajputs as feudatories of the Shishodias of Mewar.

The founder of the Thikana (Jagir) was one Ashok Parmar, a soldier of fortune, who migrated from Jagner (Bharatpur) to Chittor to serve under the legendary hero Rana Sanga of Mewar. He fought in the historic battles of Bayana and Khanwa in 1527 AD and dazzled Babur's army with his sword. Sanga conferred on him the jagir of Bijolia for displaying conspicuous gallantry on the battle field.

Being a first class samant of Mewar, the Jagirdar of Bijolia enjoyed unfettered powers of collecting land revenue and imposing taxes and lag-bags. They took begar (forced labour) without paying wages and dispensed justice with uneven scale.

The Thikana was predominately inhabited by Dhakars who were sturdy peasants. The land was fertile and Uparmal served as a granary of Mewar. Yet the kisans (peasants) could hardly afford two square meals a day. The reasons were not far to seek. During the reign of Rao Krishnasingh the kisans paid land revenue to the extent of half of their produce. They paid lagbags which numbered as many as 84. They were also made to render 'begar' whenever required by the Thikana or its officials without payment of wages in cash or kind.

In 1897 the harassed kisans gathered at Girdharipura on a social occasion and decided to send a deputation consisting of two Patels, Nanji and Thakari, to Udaipur to put up their grievances against the Thikana before the Maharana. It was after a long wait of six months at Udaipur that the Patels could have audience with Maharana Fatehsingh. The Maharana after enquiry found that there was substance in their complaint but took no action against the Jagirdar. Emboldened, the Rao retaliated

by externing both the Patels from Bijolia little knowing that he was sowing seeds of a long drawn out struggle which would shake the foundation of the century old feudal order.

In 1903, Rao Krishnasingh imposed a new levy. The people were asked to pay 'Chanwari' tax on the occasion of the marriage of their daughters. The kisans decided to suspend the marriages of their daughters till the obnoxious tax was abolished. In 1905, they met the Rao with two hundred marriagable girls and requested him to withdraw the new levy and reduce the rates of land revenue which were exorbitant. The Rao turned down the request. The kisans decided neither to cultivate their lands nor pay any land revenue or lag-bags to the Thikana. The result was that not a single field was ploughed through-out the Uparmal on "Akshaya Trithia", the auspicious day on which agricultural operations started every year. The impact was instant. The Rao surrendered. The Chanwari tax was abolished and the land revenue reduced from one half of the produce to two fifth. The victory of the kisans was complete.

In 1906 Rao Krishnasingh died. He was succeeded by Prithvi Singh. The latter had to pay a sizable amount to the Maharana as 'Talwar bandi'. The Rao shifted the burden on the people of Bijolia. He levied a new impost of 'Talwar bandi' and increased land revenue. The kisans under the leadership of Sadhu Sitaramdas lodged protest before the Rao and the Mewar Government but in vain. In 1913, nearly 15000 kisans participated in the 'no tax' campaign and abstained from ploughing the land in the Uparmal. In the meanwhile Prithvi Singh died. As his son and successor Kesarisingh was still a minor, the Mewar Government set up a 'Court of Wards' over the Thikana. The Maharana now intervened. The land revenue was reduced and a number of lag bags were abolished or their rates reduced. The Thikana authorities, however, carried out the decisions more in breach than in observance. Further, the Thikana also wanted to raise subscription for the 'War fund' launched by the British Government in the course of the first World War in 1916. At this crucial juncture in the history of the Bijolia movement came a new 'messiah' on the scene.

Coming from a family of Gujjars of Guthawali (Bulandshar district) which had participated in the first battle of independence in 1857, Bhoopsingh came into contact with top revolutionaries like Rasbihari Bose and Sachindra Sanyal as early as 1907 when he was about 25 years of age. In 1915, he was sent to Rajasthan to organise an armed rebellion in the region against the British Raj as part of an all India plan. He joined

Thakur Gopalsingh of Kharwa and others and built up a volunteer-force of 3000 young men and trained them in the use of fire arms. While they were waiting for the 'D' day, the British Government struck and upset the calculations of the revolutionaries. Gopalsingh and Bhoopsingh were arrested and interned in Tadarh fort in Ajmer Merwara. Shortly thereafter Bhoopsingh was informed by his sources that the British Government wanted him in the Firojpur conspiracy case. Bhoopsingh escaped to Mewar disguising himself as 'Vijaya Singh Pathik'. He reached Mohi via Gurla and stayed with a small Jagirdar, Dungarsingh Bhati, who himself was a sympathiser of national movement. From here he proceeded to Chittor and joined the 'Vidya Pracharni Sabha' at the instance of Rao Pratapsingh of Putholi, a follower of the well known revolutionary Raja Mahendra Pratap.

In December 1916, Sadhu Sitaramdas and Maganlal Biloo came to Chittor to attend the annual function of the V.P.Sabha and met Pathik. They requested him to come to Bijolia and lead the kisan movement. For a revolutionary like Pathik, it was a God sent opportunity. He accepted the invitation and reached Bijolia without loss of time. His assumption of the leadership of the movement heralded a new era in peasantry's struggle against the feudal order.

Pathik took over the responsibility of running the local school of the V.P.Sabha. In the evening he moved from village to village to organise the kisans. In this task he was ably assisted by Sadhu Sitaramdas, Manikyalal Varma, Prem Chand Bhil and Bhanwarlal Swarnakar, a poet who was blind since birth. Varma was an employee of the Thikana. Under inspiration from Pathik, Varma resigned his job and took a vow to serve the nation for the rest of his life.

Varma started a school at 'Umaji-ka-Kheda' as a cover for his political activities. In the meanwhile the Mewar Government issued a warrant for the arrest of Pathik at the instance of the British Government. Pathik went underground and hid himself in a dilapidated house in Umaji-ka-khera. It is remarkable that Mewar Government failed to arrest him for quite a few years though he continued to conduct his political activities from here.

In 1917, Pathik established the 'Uparmal Panchayat Board' popularly known as 'Kishan Panchayat' on the auspicious day of 'Hariyali Amavasya'. The Board consisted of 13 members with Manna Patel as Sar-panch. It became the supreme council of the kisans of

Uparmal. The Board demanded that the lag-bags and begar be abolished and recovery of contribution to the war-fund stopped. There was no response either from the Thikana or from the Maharana to whom a number of representations had been made.

Under instructions from the 'Board', the kisans withheld payment of land revenue, lag-bags and contribution to War-fund and suspended sowing operations through out the Uparmal. The Thikana authorities now decided to act. As a test case they arrested Narayan Patel, an influential kisan of Govindnivas, for his refusal to render begar. The news spread like a wild fire. By next morning two thousand kisans of Uparmal were on the streets of Bijolia demanding the release of the Patel. The management of the Thikana was upset. Patel was unconditionally released. The victory came as a shot in the arm of the Kisan Panchayat.

The Thikana now launched prosecution against the leaders, namely Varma, Sadhu and Prem Chand on charges of inciting the kisans for not paying subscription to the War-fund. No witness came forward to tender evidence against the accused. The case had to be dropped. The Thikana now arrested 51 kisans for not giving begar. They interned Varma and Sadhu to deprive the kisans of their leadership. The Thikana people destroyed their crops, attacked them with lethal weapons, put them in 'Kaths' and harassed them in hundred and one ways but failed to demoralise them. The terror spread by the Thikana received wide publicity in the country through 'Pratap' published by the late Shri Ganesh Shankar Vidayarthi from Kanpur. The Maharana appointed a Commission under Bindulal Bhattacharya. The Commission released Varma and Sadhu as a gesture of good will. It recommended relief to the kisans in land revenue, lag- bags etc. Under pressure, however, from the Thikana and other Jagirdars, the Mewar Government put the Commission's report in the cold storage. The kisans arrested earlier were, however, released.

The apathy of the State Government towards the kisans encouraged the Thikana authorities. They increased the land revenue on irrigated land and enhanced cess on sugar-cane cultivation. They assessed the standing crop exorbitantly. This brought the Bhils, Kahars and other communities also in the fold of the Kisan Panchayat. The Thikana took several repressive measures to break the Kisan movement. They arrested 200 leading kisans of Uparmal and committed a number of atrocities on the people.

The kisans decided that they would not cultivate the irrigated land. The Thikana ordered that they would charge land revenue even if they did not plough their fields. The Panchayat took up the matter with the State Government. This time the State Government intervened and ruled that no land revenue would be charged for the land not actually cultivated. It was a significant victory for the Panchayat. The other problems of the kisans, however, remained unsolved.

Pathik attended the Congress session of 1919 at Amritsar. He brought the problems of the kisans of Bijolia to the notice of leaders like Gandhiji, Madan Mohan Malviya and Tilak. The matter was not taken up formally at the session because of the Congress policy of non-intervention in the affairs of the princely States. Malviya, however, brought his influence to bear up on the Maharana who appointed another Commission headed by Pandit Ramakant Malviya, a judge of Mahendraj Sabha (High Court), to enquire into the grievances of kisans. Gandhiji too deputed his secretary, Mahadeo Desai, to study the situation in Bijolia. Desai's report convinced Gandhiji of the kisans' case. Gandhiji promised Pathik that if the kisans did not get justice, he would himself lead the Satyagrah<sup>1</sup>.

The Malaviya Commission vindicated the stand of the kisans. The State Government, however, refused to accept its recommendations. The Kisan Panchayat had no alternative but to take resort to 'Satyagrah'. A delegation of the Kisan Panchayat led by Pathik met Mahatma Gandhi at the Congress session at Nagpur in 1920 to seek his blessings for launching the Satyagrah. Gandhiji supported the decision of the Panchayat. Pathik established Rajasthan Sewa Sangh at Wardha to guide people's movements in the Rajputana States at the instance of Gandhiji. Varma now took command of the Bijolia movement under the over all supervision and guidance of Sewa Sangh whose headquarters were later on shifted to Ajmer.

The Kisan Panchayat launched civil disobedience movement. They refused to pay land revenue and lag-bags and render begar to the Thikana. They boycotted the Thikana courts and offices and referred all their disputes to the Kisan Panchayat. The people refused to comply with any order issued by the Thikana officials. The Panchayat functioned almost as a parallel Government. In 1921 the Kisans cultivated their land and removed the produce to their homes before 'Lata-kunta' in defiance

1 S S Saxena : 'Jo Desh-ke-liye jiye', p.136

of the standing orders of the Thikana. As all sources of revenue were dried the Thikana became heavily indebted<sup>1</sup>.

The movement had its echo in the neighbouring Thikanas of Begun, Parsoli, Bhensrodgarh and Amargarh. Its message even reached the kisans of Bundi and Sirohi States. Since Pathik actively participated in the movement in Begun, he was arrested and sentenced to 5 years imprisonment. The British Government was shaken with the movement. It directed the A.G.G. and the Maharana to solve the problem of the kisans of Bijolia so that the movement might not spread to the neighbouring States.

On February 4, 1921 the A.G.G. Rajputana, Sir Robert Holland, accompanied by the Resident Wilkinson and the State Minister, Prabhash Chandra Chatterji, arrived at Bijolia. The high powered delegation heard the representatives of the Rajasthan Sewak Sangh and Kisan Panchayat on the one hand and the Thikana on the other. After prolonged discussion with the parties at Bijolia and Ajmer an agreement was finally reached on June 11, 1922.

The victory of the kisans was complete. As many as 74 lag-bags were abolished. The begar system was done away with. Pending new settlement, the land revenue was reduced by 25%. The procedure regarding the mode of payment of land revenue was rationalised. The Thikana officials responsible for the atrocities were removed. Medical and educational facilities were agreed to be provided though on a nominal scale. Grazing problem was sorted out. The kisans arrested in connection with the agitation were released and the cases against them withdrawn. And above all the right of the Kisan Panchayat to settle civil and criminal disputes was recognised.

The elation amongst the kisans was short lived. The agreement caused an upheaval in the feudal world. Forces of reaction pressurised the Jagirdar to undo the agreement. The Thikana officials now started interpreting each clause of the agreement in a manner that it made a mockery of the settlement arrived at after hard bargaining on either side for about a year.

While the kisans were already perturbed over the attitude of the Thikana, the announcement of the revised rates of land revenue in February 1927 as a result of settlement added fuel to the fire. Prior to the settlement, the rate was Rs 1/- per bigha on Mal-land. Now the

1 S.S. Saxena *Bijolia Andholan ka Itihas* - p.109-110



settlement officer Mahendrasingh Ranawat, himself a Jagirdar, raised it to Rs 2.25 per bigha. On the representations made by the Kisan Panchayat, the Settlement Commissioner Mr. Trench, an English man, came to Bijolia. He heard both the parties and made some petty concessions but refused to reduce the rates of land revenue.

At a meeting of the Kisan Panchayat held in March 1927, attended by Manikyalal Varma and Ramnarayan Choudhary among others, the kisans expressed their desire to surrender their Mal-lands to the Thikana as a protest against the revised rates of land revenue. They were, however, advised not to take the extreme step without consultation with Pathik, who was about to be released from jail after three and a half years.

Soon after his release in April 1927, Pathik was extermed from Mewar. The entry of Ramnarain Choudhari in Mewar was also banned. Both of them reached Phoosariya, a village in Gwalior State, on the boarder of Mewar. Here the representatives of kisans met them on May 18, 1927. It was decided at the meeting that the kisans should send the resignations of their Mal-land.

The Kisans sent a collective resignation of the Mal-land to the Thikana on May 20. The Thikana insisted that the resignations should be individual and not collective. Consequently the kisans of 40 out of 96 villages of Uparmal surrendered 8000 bighas of Mal-land in all to the Thikana individually<sup>1</sup>. The Thikana accepted the resignations and allotted most of the surrendered land to other tenants quickly.

The Kisans were confident that there would be no takers for the surrendered land and the Thikana would be compelled to come to terms with them on the land revenue issue. This was not to be. Besides, the decision had divided the kisans. Not even 50% of the kisans had surrendered their land. By now the Rajasthan Sewak Sangh had practically became defunct. The entry of Pathik and Choudhari into Mewar had been banned. Varma had been arrested for his refusal to deposit cash security for good behaviour<sup>2</sup>. The kisans were in a quandary<sup>3</sup>.

1. S.S. Saxena - 'Ibid' p. 64

2. S.S. Saxena - 'Ibid' p. 49

3. S.S. Saxena - 'Ibid' p. 53

Varma was released from jail after 7 months after the Kisan Panchayat deposited the security money<sup>1</sup>. On the request of Panchayat Varma took over the local leadership of the kisans who were now anxious for the restoration of their lands<sup>2</sup>. When Varma failed in his efforts to persuade the Thikana and the Mewar Government for the return of lands to their original holders, he approached Seth Jamnalal Bajaj to take up the Bijolia affair in his hand. The latter agreed to do so provided Pathik washed his hands off the movement<sup>3</sup>. It was not without hesitation that Pathik agreed to do so in 1929. Bajaj now entrusted the task to a Gandhian, Haribhau Upadhyay, who had established the Gandhi Ashram at Hatundi (Ajmer) in 1927. The Kisan Panchayat ratified the decision and accepted Bajaj and Upadhyay as its advisers and Varma as their local leader.

Upadhyay met Trench and other officials of the State in April 1929. He reached an agreement with them that lag-bags would be abolished and that the Government would ensure that the Thikana implemented the agreement of 1922. As regards the surrendered land, it was stated that the land, which had still not been allotted, would be returned to the original owners but that the land which had already been allotted to the new tenants could not be restored. The demand for reduction in the land revenue, the root cause of the agitation, was outright rejected. The agreement brought little cheer to the kisans. Upadhyay took up the matter again with the State Government but there was no response from it. In 1930, Upadhyay was arrested at Ajmer in connection with the Civil Disobedience Movement launched by Gandhi.

- 1 We are inclined to agree with the view expressed by Dr. Pemaram in his book 'Agrarian Movement in Rajasthan' (p.36) that Pathik and Choudhari should share the responsibility of the fateful decision taken at Phoosaria village. Since, however, Varma abstained from attending the meeting, it seems that he was not in favour of such a course of action. Varma was arrested soon thereafter and remained in jail for seven months. The kisans, who had now realised the folly of their decision offered the leadership to Varma after his release from jail. It clearly indicated that Varma was not a party to the decision.
- 2 S.S. Saxena - 'Ibid' p. 49
- 3 Bajaj originally hailed from S'kar in Rajasthan. He had however, migrated to Wardha where he came into close contact with Gandhiji and became Treasurer of the Indian National Congress. He maintained his interest in the political movements in the States of Rajasthan till his death in 1942. He had developed differences with Pathik during the latter's stay at Wardha in early twenties.

On release from prison in early 1931 Upadhyay resumed his correspondence with the Maharana and other State officials, but without any fruitful result. The Kisan Panchayat decided to launch 'Satyagrah' under the leadership of Varma.

On April 19, 1931 the Kisan Panchayat gave an ultimatum to the State Government and the Thikana that the kisans would start resuming their surrendered lands in the morning of 'Akshaya Tritia' corresponding to April 21. The State Government on its part sent a contingent of the army to meet any eventuality. Some 400 kisans started ploughing their respective fields. The army and the men of the Thikana threw them out. Varma was arrested. A number of kisans were also arrested next day while they resumed ploughing their fields.

In May 1931 the kisans decided to postpone their Satyagrah to give one more opportunity to the authorities to consider over their demands. The State Government responded by arresting prominent workers like Sobhalal Gupta, Durga Prasad Choudhari, Ladu Ram Joshi, Pyar Chand Bisnoi and Achaleswar Prasad Sharma who has reached Bijolia to help the kisans in their struggle, were arrested and externed from Bijolia. Meanwhile Varma and 15 kisan Satyagrahis were each sentenced to 4 months imprisonment and fine. The State Government made its intentions further clear when it banned the entry of the Bijolia Enquiry Committee set up by the A.I. States People's Conference into the State.

On the advice of Mahatma Gandhi and Bajaj, the Kisan Panchayat decided to suspend the Satyagrah 'sin-e-die' to enable Bajaj to discuss the problems with the Maharana and his ministers. Bajaj met Maharana and other officials of the State Government as a result of which Varma and the arrested Kisans were released from jail and a court-of-wards was set up over the Thikana. The problems of the kisans, however, remained unsolved.

In June 1932, Varma met Sir Sukhdeo Prasad 'Musahab Ala' of Mewar at Udaipur and emphasised the need for early return of the land to the original khatedars. The Musahib Ala interned him in the fort of Kumbhalgarh. When Varma was released from there in November 1933, he was externed from Mewar. With the banishment of Varma all activities of the Kisan Panchayat came to a stand still.

Varma remained in 'exile' for more than 4 years. He spent his period in Ajmer-Merwara and Dungarpur in the service of the downtrodden. He returned to Mewar in 1937 and undertook the tour of

the State with a view to mobilise public support for establishment of Mewar Prajamandal. In April 1938 he succeeded in his mission but soon the Prajamandal was declared 'unlawful' and Varma was externed. During the Satyagrah that followed Varma was arrested in the British territory of Ajmer and brought to Mewar. He was released in January 1940. In February 1941, the ban on the functioning of Prajamandal was lifted. Soon Varma took up the cause of the kisans of Bijolia with the then Prime Minister, Sir T.Vijayaraghavacharya. The Prime Minister deputed his Revenue Minister Dr. Mohansingh Mehta to Bijolia to settle the problem to the satisfaction of the kisans. Dr. Mehta carried out the mandate faithfully. The land was restored to original tenants. Thus ended the epic struggle of the kisans of Bijolia which started almost half a century back. Incidentally the movement paved the way for the abolition of the institution of jagirs in Rajasthan. It was Varma who abolished jagirs in 1948 when he became Premier of the United State of Rajasthan.

### **Adivasi Movement**

The Bhils and the Garasias, also known as Adivasis, had settled in the Mewar region long before the advent of the Guhil rule in the State. They were the pillars of the Guhil-Shishodiya dynasty and stood by it in all its thick and thin. If the Mewar rulers could withstand the onslaught of the mighty Mughals, the credit should go to them at least partially. They were, however, a neglected lot during the British rule.

The East India Company having guaranteed Mewar against external attacks in 1818, the successive rulers totally forgot the services of the valient tribe rendered to their ancestors. The Adivasis suffered indignities and even starvation. They were made to do forced labour (beth begar) without payment of even nominal wages. They had to pay a number of lag bags and high rates of land revenue reducing them to abject poverty. Their condition in the jagir areas was still worse. Similar was the case with the Adivasis living in the neighbouring States.

In the beginning of the 20th century, Guru Govind, a Banjara by birth, organised the Adivasis of Mewar, Dungarpur, Banswara and other neighbouring States. The reformist movement started by Guru Govind amongst them soon turned into a political movement against the tyrannical rule of the princes and their Jagirdars. The movement was crushed by the British Government brutally at the request of the rulers of the State's concerned. The army surrounded the peaceful congregation of the Adivasis on the Mana hills in 1908 killing and wounding hundreds of Adivasis.

After 13 years the Bhils rose again. In 1921 Motilal Tejawat, born in a Oswal family, gave up the job of Kamdar in the jagir of Jadol and took up the cause of Adivasis. He mobilized the Adivasis of Mewar, Vagad, Sirohi, Danta, Palanpur, Ider and Vijaynagar States and demanded the abolition of beth-begar, lag-bags and reduction in the land revenue. The rulers of these States decided to strike. The armed forces of the States fired on a large conference of the Adivasis held at Neemdi in Vijayanagar State in 1922 under the leadership of Tejawat. Some 1200 Adivasis were killed and thousands were wounded. The Bhil leader Tejawat was also hurt. He was picked up by his followers and taken to safety. He remained underground for about 7 years and surrendered to the Idar State police in 1929 on the advice of Mahatma Gandhi. He was brought to Udaipur and put in the Central Jail from where he was released in 1936. Though the movement was crushed, the rulers and their Jagirdars had to abolish several lag bags and reduce the land revenue to some extent to pacify the Adivasis.

### **Mewar Prajamandal**

The Indian National Congress was established in 1885. For long the policy of the Congress in relation to the Indian States was one of 'non-intervention'. It was only at the Hanipura Congress in 1938 that the States' people were allowed to form political organisations in their respective States with the object of establishment of responsible Governments under the aegis of the rulers. In Mewar, a prominent leader of the Bijolia movement, Manikyalal Varma, established the Mewar Prajamandal on April 24, 1938 at Udaipur along with certain leading public figures like Balwantsingh Mehta, Bhurelal Baya, Vaidya Bhawanishankar and others. The Maharana declared the Prajamandal as illegal and expelled Varma from Mewar. Varma made Ajmer the centre of his activities. He launched satyagraha for the removal of ban on the Prajamandal. The satyagraha continued from October 1938 to January 1939. More than 250 workers were arrested. In February, 1939 the Mewar police illegally arrested Varma from the Ajmer territory. Varma was sentenced to two years imprisonment and put in the Kumbhalgarh fort. Mahatma Gandhi severely condemned his arrest.

The start of the political activity in the State made the Maharana realise that he could no more rule the State in the manner he and his ancestors had done in the past. In 1939 he replaced Dharamnarayan Kak by Sir T. Vijayaraghavacharya as Prime Minister. The new Prime Minister promulgated civil and criminal laws on the British Indian lines.

The district set-up was completely overhauled. He separated civil judiciary from the executive and established a High Court in place of Mahendraj Sabha. He summarily dismissed several civil and police officers on charges of corruption and bribery. These reforms were followed by the removal of ban on the Prajamandal in February 1941.

The Prajamandal held its first session at Udaipur in November 1941 under the presidentship of Manikyalal Varma. Top Congress leaders like Acharya Kripalani and Smt. Vijayalaxmi Pandit came to address the session. It was here that a young man, Mohan Lal Sukhadia, came on the political scene and was appointed general secretary of the Prajamandal. In 1942 Mahatma Gandhi launched the Quit India Movement. Mewar Prajamandal also participated in the movement. The schools and colleges in the State were closed for a number of days. Hundreds of people were arrested. They were released in 1944.

The Mewar Prajamandal hosted the annual session of the All India States People's conference at Udaipur on Dec. 31, 1945 and January 1, 1946 under the presidentship of Pandit Jawahar Lal Nehru. The Kashmir leader Sheikh Abdullah also participated in the session. The conference gave a big philip to the political movement in the State.

As changes of great magnitude had been taking place in the country, the Maharana had to move with the times. He removed Shri T. Vijay as Prime Minister and appointed the well known constitutional lawyer K.M. Munshi as his advisor. A new constitution for Mewar drafted by Munshi was promulgated in May 1947. The constitution provided for the formation of an assembly and the setting up of a cabinet responsible to the legislature. The Maharana simultaneously included two nominees of Mewar Prajamandal and one of Khashtriya Parishad in the Cabinet as a step towards democratisation of the government. The Prajamandal nominees were Mohan Lal Sukhadia and Heera Lal Kothari. The Khashtriya Parishad, an organisation of Jagirdars, was represented in the Cabinet by Raghuveer Singh Ochhadi. Mewar was one of the first princely states to join the Constituent Assembly. The two members nominated to the Constituent Assembly from Mewar were the new Prime Minister Sir S.V. Ramamurthy and the Prajamandal leader Manikya Lal Varma.

On June 3, 1947 the British Government announced that the country would be divided into two sovereign states of India and Pakistan

and that it would transfer power to the representatives of the respective countries on August 15, 1947. As regards the Indian States it stated that they were free to accede either to India or Pakistan or to remain independent. The Maharana gave a lead to his brother princes and acceded to India. The conspiracy of the Nawab of Bhopal and the Maharaja of Jodhpur to persuade the Maharana and certain other princes to join Pakistan failed.

Soon after its establishment, the Ministry of States at the Centre decided that only such of the States would be allowed to maintain their identity whose population and revenue exceeded one million and Rs 10 million respectively. Mewar fulfilled the criteria of viability. In February 1948 the process of elections to the State Legislative Assembly began. The elections in the city of Udaipur were slated for April, 4, 1948. The contest was between the Prajmandal and the Kshatriya Parishad. While the voting was on, the followers of the Parishad removed the national flag from a building housing a polling booth and threw it away in a well. The incident led to demonstrations all over the city. The next day two young boys, Shanti and Anandi, were killed and several others injured in police firing in the main market of the city. The Prajmandal boycotted the elections and demanded immediate setting up of an interim popular government. In the meanwhile the Government of India decided to form a united state of Rajasthan with the merger of nine non-viable States with Kota as capital. Though Mewar was viable, the Maharana preferred to merge Mewar in the new State rather than handing over power to the representatives of the Prajmandal. The Government of India welcomed the proposal. Mewar was accordingly merged in Rajasthan. The revised edition of Rajasthan, which made Mewar as its integral part, was inaugurated on April 18, 1948 by the Prime Minister of India, Pt. Jawaharlal Nehru. The rule of Shishodias, which lasted more than twelve centuries, came to an abrupt end. A Cabinet consisting of public representatives of various Covenanted States was appointed with Manikyalal Varma as Prime Minister.

#### **Area, population etc.**

Situated in the southern part of Rajasthan, the area of Mewar State was 12691 square miles. The northern and eastern parts of the State consisted of an elevated plateau slopping gradually to the north-east, while the southern and western parts were covered with rocks, hills and dense forests and embraced wildest portion of the Aravalli hills. The principal rivers were the Chambal, the Banas, the Khari, the Kothari, the

Berach, the Som and the Jakham. Except the Chambal which flew only a few miles in the State, the other rivers were non-perennial. There were several artificial lakes like Jaisamand, Rajsamand, Udaisagar, Fatehsagar etc. which were all built by the rulers. None of them were, however, used for irrigation. The average rainfall was about 25 inches. The population of the State was 18.79 lakhs in 1881, 23.10 lakhs in 1901, 15.68 lakhs in 1931 and 19.26 lakhs in 1941. The sudden fall in population in the census of 1901 was due to the great famine of 1899. The fauna consisted of antelope, deer, leopard, tiger, bear, sambhar, chital etc.

### **The Economy**

Mewar was badly ravaged by the Marahatas and Pindaries during the last phase of the Mughal empire. Its economy was so much shattered that it was with some difficulty that Maharana Jawan Singh could borrow an amount of Rs 10,000 from the local money-lenders for the funeral of his father, Maharana Bhimsingh<sup>1</sup>. The State revenue fell to Rs 11 lakhs as against an expenditure of Rs 12 lakhs. The tribute payable by the Maharana to the British Government accumulated in arrears to the extent of Rs 7 lakhs. The Pradhan, Mehta Ramsingh, collected Rs 5 lakhs by fair and foul means and paid to the British Government. The recovery of the balance of Rs 2 lakhs was waived by the British Government<sup>2</sup>. As there was lot of bungling in the collection of land revenue the Maharana gave a contract for collection of land revenue for Rs 12.75 lakhs a year to one Jalamechand Jhanwar who incurred heavy losses and gave up the contract. The revenue from customs was negligible, as trade and commerce had been ruined by the plunder and loot of the Marahata and Pindary hoards.

The financial position of the State continued to be bad even during the reign of Maharana Sardarsingh who had succeeded Maharana Jawansingh in 1838. He recovered thousands of rupees as 'fine' from a number of mutsaddis. Even then the State failed to pay annual tribute to the British Government.

When Maharana Swaroopsingh ascended the throne in 1842 the State was heavily in debt. Within a few years he cleared up the debt with the help of Seth Zorawarmal Bapna. He set up a bank known as 'Rawli Dukan' in the public sector. The Maharana undertook tours of various parts of the State to study the economic situation<sup>3</sup>. This resulted in the

1. Shyamal Das, Veer Vinod Pt.II. p.1784

2. Shyamal Das, Ibid. 1791-92

3. Shyamal Das, Ibid. 1943



increase of the State revenue. The Maharana awarded the contract for collection of customs duty and land revenue of some of the parganas to Seth Zorawarmal<sup>1</sup>. He also appointed his trusted men as Hakims who brought more revenue to the State. He dealt with dishonest officers with a heavy hand. He issued a new one-rupee coin known as 'Swaroop Sahi'. On one side of the coin was superscribed 'Chitrakoot Udaipur' and on the other 'Dosti London' (friendship with London).

Since the Maharana was able to maintain law and order, the economic conditions of the people improved. The State finances were much better in that the Maharana spent lakhs of rupees on charity and in the construction of lakes and palaces. In spite of this, he left a sizable amount of Rs 30 lakhs in the treasury when he died. In 1865-66 the State revenue was Rs 27 lakhs which included Rs 17.32 lakhs from land revenue and Rs 4.03 lakhs from customs. The total expenditure was Rs 26.85 lakhs of which Rs 18.12 lakhs were spent on public works<sup>2</sup>.

The land in the State was divided into jagir and khalsa. The tenure in the khalsa could be described as Royatwari. The tenant was generally undisturbed in his possession so long as he paid the land revenue (bhog or hanshil). The khalsa had pucca or kuccha land. The former gave the occupier the right to sell or mortgage land, while the occupier of the kuccha land was like a tenant at will.

The land revenue was earlier realised in kind, the State's share being one-fourth to one-half of the produce. In 1878 regular settlement was undertaken in khalsa lands. The revenue was assessed according to classification of soil ranging from one and one-half annas to Rs 15 per acre. In jagir areas the Jagirdar concerned realized land revenue in kind upto half of the produce. In addition, the Jagirdars imposed hundreds of lag-bags and took begar from the peasants and others. This led to powerful agrarian movements in jagirs of Bijolia, Begun, Parsoli etc. Thousands of farmers were imprisoned and scores of people killed. Ultimately the movements led to the abolition of lag-bags and begar.

About one-fourth of culturable area in the State was irrigated. Irrigation was mainly done from wells which numbered more than a lakh. The State produced two harvests called 'Shialoo' (Kharif) and 'Unhaloo' (Rabi). The principal crops were maize, wheat, barley, jowar, oilseeds, cotton and sugarcane.

1. Shyamaldas, *Ibid*, 1942

2. Shyamaldas, *Ibid*, 2074-75

The forests occupied about 4600 sq.miles of which 72 square miles of area was reserved for sporting purposes. The people cut wood and grazed their cattle at will in the forest areas. The income from forests was a few thousand rupees.

Mewar was rich in minerals. The lead and zink mines at Zawar yielded a net annual revenue of Rs 2 lakhs till 1872. As the supply of water in the mines increased, the dewatering of the mines manually became difficult and the State was not in a position to purchase machinery for the purpose. It was sometime in 1945 that the State leased out these mines to a private company known as The Metal Corporation of India. The company continued to work these mines till 1966 A.D. when they were taken over by the Hindustan Zinc Ltd., a public sector company, floated by the Government of India. The production from the mines in 1948 was about 700 tonnes of lead concentrates and 1600 tonnes of zinc concentrates.

Mewar had good deposits of mica. In 1935 the State granted monopoly of this mineral to two private companies. One of them operated in the entire khalsa area and the other in the jagir area. These companies exploited mica in their respective areas till Mewar was merged in Rajasthan. More than 80% of the mica production was from Bhilwara district. Soapstone mines were situated in the districts of Bhilwara and Udaipur. A private company held monopoly rights of these mines. The production was about 2500 tonnes which was roughly 50 percent of the total production in India. Emerald, one of the precious stones, was first discovered in 1943 in a village Kala-Guman in Udaipur district. Some private companies exploited this mineral. Gradually, however, the production became uneconomical and the mines were abandoned.

The cottage industry in the State mainly consisted of manufacture of swords, daggers, cotton cloth, tinned utensils etc. A cotton ginning and pressing factory was established in public sector at Bhilwara as early as 1905. It was followed by establishment of similar factories at Kapasan, Gulabpura, Choti-Sadri and Chittor between 1920 and 1925. These factories gave a philip to the production of Kapas and the cotton trade. The first textile factory known as the Mewar Textile Mills Ltd. was established at Bhilwara in 1937. Another textile unit known as 'The Mahadeo Cotton Textile Mills' was established there some time later. It was, however, closed after a few years. The number of looms and

spindless in the Mewar Textile Mills were 250 and 7812 respectively. The authorised capital was Rs 50 lakhs. The only sugar factory in Mewar was established at Bhopalsagar in 1931. Its capital investment was Rs 20 lakhs and crushing capacity 500 tonnes per day.

The local currency was used side by side with the British currency. Five different kinds of coins in local currency were in circulation, viz., Chittori, Udaipuri, Bhilwari, Swroopshahi, and Chandori. The first three coins, however, went out of circulation by 1910. In 1930 Maharana Bhupalsingh introduced a new one rupee-coin which became worth Annas ten in terms of the imperial rupee. The new rupee was popularly known as 'Bhunia'. The State had also its 8 anna and 4 anna coins. The local copper currency consisted of Bhiladi paisa and Dhingla.

### **Transport and Communications**

The Rajputana-Malwa Railway traversed the State with a length of 82 miles. In 1895 the State Government constructed the Udaipur-Chittor railway with a length of 79 miles. The total expenditure on the project was Rs 21 lakhs. In 1936, another 66 mile long railway line was constructed between Mawli and Marwar junctions. The net revenue from the railways to the State in 1936 was Rs 2.25 lakhs.

The road between Nashriabad and Neemuch was constructed between 1866 and 1875 at a cost of about Rs 2.8 lakhs. One third of this amount was contributed by the British Government. It was partly metalled and partly unmetalled. In 1870, the State Government constructed the Udaipur-Kherwada road which was unmetalled. Its length was 120 miles. The road facilitated export of cotton to Bombay.

In addition to the imperial post office, a local postal system called 'Brahmini Dak' was established in 1850 A.D. It was managed by a Brahmin family and was financially supported by the State Government. Originally the State Government paid to the management only Rs. 1200 p.a. but the amount was increased to Rs 12000 p.a. in 1932. In lieu of this payment the Government dak was accepted free of charge. A peculiar feature of the system was that a postal fee of half an anna per letter was charged from the addressee at the time of delivery of the letter. The safety of the delivery of the letter was thus guaranteed. Apart from the ordinary letters, the Brahmini Dak also accepted registered letters, money orders and parcels on payment of nominal fee.

### **Education and Health**

The State paid little attention to education till 1863 when the first government school was established at Udaipur. Uptil now irregular Makhtabs and Pathshalas were run by maulvis and pandits respectively. In 1866 there were 513 students in the Government school. The same year a girls school was opened at Udaipur which had 51 girls on its rolls. In 1885 the boy's school was raised to a High school.

According to the Imperial Gazetters of India (Rajputana) 1908, the literacy in Mewar in 1905 was 4% (17.4% for males and 0.2% for females). There were 42 government schools including one High school at Udaipur, 10 missionary schools and 2 run by the Mewar Bhil Corps. The total expenditure incurred by the Government on education was Rs 24,000. The expenditure on education was made up partly by a special surcharge on land revenue. A fee of one anna per student was also levied as tuition fee. In 1923 the High school at Udaipur was raised to the standard of an intermediate college. The same year the Bhupal Nobles School was opened for the children of samants and middle schools were opened at Chittorgarh, Kherwara and Bhilwara. In 1940 the Intermediate college, Udaipur was raised to post graduate standard. The same year High schools were established at Udaipur, Bhilwara and Chittorgarh.

By 1935, there were 15 dispensaries in various towns in the State. The capital had one general hospital, a women's hospital and a mental hospital. In 1939 a new well equipped hospital was established at Udaipur. In addition there were two army hospitals at Kherwara and Kotara.

### **Literary activities**

In 1882 Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, came to Udaipur on the invitation of Maharana Sajjansingh. It was here that Swamiji revised the manuscript of his famous work 'Satvarath Prakash' and completed his commentary on the Vedas. It is difficult to say if the Arya Samaj movement had created much impact in Mewar.

Kaviraja Shyamaldas wrote his 'Veer Vinod' at the instance of Maharana Sajjansingh. It was completed in 1892. This monumental work on history of Mewar and some other States is considered as most authentic. During this period Bhartendu Harishchandra, the well-known

national poet of his time, visited Udaipur at the invitation of the Maharana.

### **Administrative set up.**

Earlier, Mewar was divided into 30 parganas directly ruled from the State capital. In 1878, a three tier administration was established. At the apex was the Mahakmakhas headed by the Pradhan. At the field level the State was divided into ten districts namely, Magra, Girwa, Kumbhalgarh, Sahada, Rasmi, Chhoti-Sadri, Chittorgarh, Mandalgarh, Jahazpur, and Bhilwara. The lowest unit of administration was a pargana (niyabat) headed by a Naib Hakim, who enjoyed limited judicial powers also. Each district consisted of two or more paragnas. The head of the district was called Hakim who had civil as well as magisterial powers. On the civil side he decided suits upto Rs 5000 while on the criminal side he could pass a sentence upto one year. Though there was no civil or criminal procedure code, the Hakim was guided by the laws of British India or by the circulars of Mahakma Khas.

An appeal against the judgement of Hakim lay before the Hakim Sadar-e-Diwani or the Hakim-Faujdari as the case may be. The highest court was the Mahendra Sabha. In the jagir areas, except in the first class thikanas, which had limited civil and criminal powers, the Jagirdars enjoyed only revenue powers. The judicial powers in these thikanas were exercised by the Hakims functioning in the districts concerned.

In 1940, the administrative set up was completely over-hauled. A Council of Ministers was set up as the highest executive and legislative body. It consisted of 5 ministers headed by the Prime Minister. Each Minister had one or more departments under him. The ministers were severally and collectively responsible to the Ruler. The departmental heads reported to the Minister concerned. The State was divided into two divisions each headed by a collector. Each division was divided into districts headed by a deputy collector. Similarly each district was divided into two or more tehsils each headed by a sub-deputy collector. The collector, in addition to the revenue and executive powers, enjoyed powers of a district magistrate. The deputy collectors were ex-officio additional district magistrates while the sub-deputy collectors enjoyed powers of a second class magistrate.

The civil judiciary was separated from the executive. The munsif in each district enjoyed civil powers upto Rs 5000. At the head quarters of each division there was a district and sessions judge who heard appeals

against the judgements of the district magistrates and the munsifs. The appex court was redesignated as 'High Court' consisting of a Chief Justice and two judges.

The Police was also reorganised. Each division was manned by a Superintendent and district by a Dy. Superintendent. The heads of the Revenue, Settlement and Customs departments were known as Commissioners. The head of the Forest Department was designated as 'Conservator'. The head of the State Railways was known as 'General Manager' while that of the Education Department as Director of Public instructions.

## **(2) Dungarpur.**

### **History**

Maharawal Jaswant Singh II, who had entered into a subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in December 1818 was thoroughly incompetent. He failed to deal with the revolt of his own samants and Bhils. The E.I.C. intervened and crushed the revolt in 1825. Simultaneously it pensioned off the Maharawal and sent him to Vrindavan.

As Jaswant Singh had no issue, the E.I.C. put Dalpat Singh, a scion of the house of Pratapgarh, on the throne in 1825. This was resented by the Jagirdars on the ground that Dalpatsingh did not belong to the Rawal branch of Shishodias. In 1844 Maharawal Sanwatsingh of Pratapgarh died without an heir. This solved the Dungarpur problem. Dalpatsingh was shifted to Pratapgarh and Udaisingh of Sabli was put on the Dungarpur throne in accordance with the wishes of samants. Udaisingh II was conferred with the ruling powers on his attaining majority in 1858. During his minority the State administration helped the E.I.C. in controlling the Bhils of Kherwara cantonment from joining the sepoy-mutiny of 1857.

On his death in February 1897, Udaisingh was succeeded by his grand son Vijaysingh, whose father Khumansingh had died earlier. Vijaysingh was then only 11 years old. During his minority the administration was run by a regency council under the supervision of the Political Agent. Vijaysingh himself was sent for his education to Mayo College Ajmer from where he passed his post diploma course. He was conferred with full ruling powers in February 1909. He improved the State finances and started construction of the Edward Samand Lake. He died in 1918.

Vijaysingh was succeeded by his eldest son Laxmansingh who was only 10 years old. The young prince had his education at Mayo College Ajmer and training in England before he was conferred with the ruling powers in February 1928. He constructed roads in the State and established an elected municipality at Dungarpur. When the State was merged with the United State of Rajasthan in March 1948, he was made Uprajpramukh of the new State.

### **Social & Political activities**

In 1935, a local social worker, Bhogi Lal Pandya, established the Harijan Sewa Samiti at Dungarpur under the inspiration of the late Thakkar Bappa. Later-on the well-known leader of the Bijolia movement, Manikya Lal Varma, came to Dungarpur and established the Vagad Sewa Mandir at a village Kharlayee and set up a network of centres in the area with a view to spread education and create social consciousness among the Bhils. In 1937 Varma left Dungarpur handing over the Vagad Sewa Mandir to Bhogi Lal Pandya. As the Dungarpur administration was unhappy with the activities of the Vagad Sewa Mandir, Pandya closed it and established the Sewa Sangh in its place. He also started a number of hostels for Adivasi students.

In August 1944 some of the leading members of the Sewa Sangh including Bhogilal Pandya, Gauri Shankar Upadhyaya, Hari Deo Joshi and Shivalal Kotadia established the Dungarpur Prajamandal whose objective was to establish responsible government in the State. Pandya was elected as President and Kotadia as General Secretary of the Prajamandal.

In April 1946 the Prajamandal held its first session at Dungarpur which was attended by the provincial leaders like Gokul Bhai Bhatt, Manikya Lal Varma, Heera Lal Shastri and Yugal Kishore Chaturvedi. In this session resolutions were passed demanding establishment of responsible Government and withdrawal of arbitrary rules regulating the opening of private schools and hostels.

The same year the Dungarpur administration started procurement of foodgrains even in areas affected by drought. The farmers launched satyagraha under the leadership of Devram Sharma of Sanwla. Sharma was arrested. The Prajamandal now took the movement in its hands. The Government arrested Pandya and 28 other Prajamandal workers. Pandya

went on hunger strike for not treating him and his colleagues in the jail as political prisoners. He broke his hunger strike after 15 days when the demand was accepted. The news of Pandya's hunger strike had, meanwhile, spread in various parts of the State. Consequently demonstrations and hartals took place at several places. The provincial leaders Bhatt, Varma and Shastri reached Dungarpur and met the Maharaja; as a result of which the procurement of foodgrains in the drought affected areas was discontinued and the leaders and workers of the Prajamandal were released.

In May 1947 the officials of the State Government attempted to close the school run by the Sewa Sangh at Poonawara. They beat the school teacher, Shiv Ram and kidnapped him. Pandya and his colleagues, Upadhyaya and Kotadia, reached Poonawara where they were severely beaten and arrested by the police. The police treated Pandya specially harshly. It even went to the shameful extent of compelling him to drink his own urine.

In June the police went to Rastapal to close another school run by the Sewa Sangh. In the process Nanabhai Khat, owner of the school building, died when police beat him severely. The police tied the school teacher, Sangabhai, with a truck and tried to drag him. Kalibai, a 12 year old Bhil girl, could not tolerate this inhuman act of the police and cut down the rope with which Sangabhai was tied with the truck. The police opened fire in which Kalibai and six other Bhil women were seriously injured. They were brought to the hospital at Dungarpur where the young girl succumbed to the injury. When the Bhils of the area heard of this gruesome incident, they started beating drums. The Bhils gathered in large numbers at Rastapal along with their traditional bows and arrows. The police, seeing the angry mood of the crowd, took to their heels. The armed Bhils marched to Dungarpur. When the Maharawal saw the crowd, he released Pandya and his co-workers. A confrontation between the Bhils and the police was thus averted. The people of Dungarpur built a park in the memory of the two martyrs, Nanabhai Khat and Kalibai and erected their statues. Since then the people of Dungarpur hold a fair at the park annually to commemorate the memory of the martyrs.

As the political situation in the country took a dramatic turn and India became independent, the Maharawal appointed Gauri Shankar Upadhyaya and Bhikabhai Bhil as popular ministers. In early 1948



Upadhyaya was elevated as Prime Minister of the State. In March 1948 Dungarpur disappeared from the map of India as it was merged with the United State of Rajasthan.

### **Area and population.**

The Dungarpur State was situated in the south of Mewar. It had an area of 1447 sq. miles. The State, though fairly open in the south and the east, consisted for the most part of the stoney hills covered with jungles of cactus, jujube-trees and salar. It had two perennial rivers, viz. the Mahi and its tributary the Som. The Mahi formed its eastern border with Banswara. The other minor rivers were the Majam, the Vatarak, the Bhadar and the Moran. The average rainfall in the State was 27 inches.

The number of towns and villages in the State were 632. The poppulation of the State in 1891 was 1.65 lakhs which was reduced to mere one lakh in 1901 on account of the wide spread famine of 1899-1900. In 1931 the population rose to 2.28 lakhs. It went up to 2.74 lakhs in 1941. It consisted of 2.64 lakhs Hindus and the rest muslims. Amongst the Muslims there were Sunnis as well as Shiyas. The State had the disinction of having at Galiakot the well known Dargah of Pir Faqur-u-ddin, which was worshiped by the Dawoodi Bohara sect of the Shiyas from various parts of the world.

The administration of the State was in the hands of the Maharawal subject to the overall control of the Political Agent. The Maharawal was assisted in the administration by a Council of Ministers. The State was divided into three districts each in charge of a Ziledar who had powers of a third class Magistrate and tried civil suits not exceeding Rs 100. The faujdar, besides, hearing the appeals against the decisions of the Ziledars, was a first class magistrate and tried civil suits upto Rs 10,000. The appeals against the order of the faujdar were heard by the Council. The Council also had the powers to try sessions casses and civil suits valuing more than Rs 10,000. The decisions of the Council were subject to the confirmation of the Resident in Mewar. The sentence of death and imprisonment for life had to be confirmed by the A.G.G. in Rajputana.

The coinage current in the State was British as well as Chittori of Mewar and Shalimsahi of Pratapgarh. In 1904 the Chittori and the Shalimasahi were demonetised and the British coin became the sole legal tender.

**The Bhil tribe.**

The State was dominated by the Bhil tribe. The tribe appears to have migrated to this part of Rajasthan from Maru-desh sometime in the 8th century. Interestingly the Bhils claim their descent from the Rajputs such as Chauhans, Parmars, Rathors, Bhatias, Gohils and Solankis. The Bhils occupied a place of pride in the States of Mewar, Dungarpur and Banswara. The Bhils used to put tilak on foreheads of the rulers of their States with the blood of their thumbs on the occasion of coronation ceremony. During the medieval times the Bhils were the main-stay of the defence of these States.

The Bhils remained totally cut off from the society till social workers entered their areas in the beginning of the 20th century. Govind Guru was the first to organise them. The Bhil movement of 1921 organised by Motilal Tejawat in the region, had its impact on the Bhils of the State. In thirties Mankya Lal Varma, Bhogilal Pandya, Balwant Singh Mehta, Harideo Joshi and Gauri Shankar Upadhyaya served amongst the Adivashis of Dungarpur by opening schools, adult education centres and hostels.

**Economy**

The cultivated area in the State was confined to the low grounds between the hills. The soil was of rich alluvial nature. The principal crops were maize and rice in Kharif and wheat, barley, gram, pauppy and sugarcane in Rabi. On the hill slopes shifting system of cultivation was practised. About 1/5th of the cultivated area was irrigated from the tanks. There were very few wells in the State. While the profession of the people was mainly agriculture, some families in the towns were engaged in carving of wood and stone and production of silver jewellery and brace and copper utensils.

The main exports of the State were foodgrains, oil-seeds and mahua flowers and the imports were rice, salt and cloth. There was no railway line and no metalled roads in the State till Dungarpur was connected with Kherwada and Modasa by a metal road in the late thirties. The means of transport were bullock carts, horses and bullocks. Interestingly the upper caste Hindus in the State considered riding on camels as irreligious. The staple food of the people in the State was maize and rice. Upto 1875 the State was abundant in teak and other timber trees. The Bhils, however, gradually destroyed or burnt the jungles not only for earning their bread but also as part of their 'rituals'.

Land was classified into khalsa, jagir and kherat. In the khalsa area, in most cases the assessment of 'barar' or ground rent was prescribed for a fixed term. In other cases the same was determined after inspection of crops. The land revenue was collected sometimes in cash and at other times in kind. The first settlement was done in 1906 in most of the villages. The rates per bigha varied from Rs 7 for the 'Chahi' to As. 8 for the 'Rankar'.

In 1935 the total revenue of the State was about Rs 7 lakhs. The main sources of revenue were land revenue Rs 2.68 lakhs, customs Rs 1.22 lakhs and excise Rs 1.10 lakhs. The important items of expenditure were Rs 40,000 on police, Rs 22,000 on army, Rs 17,000 on health services and Rs 50,000 on horses and other karkhanas. The Privy purse of the ruler and the expenditure on the palace amounted to more than a lakh of rupees. By and large the finances of the State during the period of the last Maharawal Laxmansingh were sound.

### **3. Banswara**

#### **History**

Maharawal Ummedsingh died soon after he had entered into the treaty of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in 1818. He was succeeded by Bhawanisingh. As the new ruler mis-managed the affairs of the State, the British Government appointed Capt. Spheres as Diwan of the State who was, however, poisoned to death. Bhawanisingh died in November 1838 without an issue. Bahadursingh of Khandu succeeded him. On his death in 1844 he was succeeded by his five year old son Laxmansingh. During his minority Shamat Ali Khan, a nominee of the East India Company, ran the administration. The prince was conferred with the ruling powers in 1856.

In the mutiny of 1857 the Marahata commander Tantiya Tope surrounded Banswara. Laxmansingh fled to the jungles. He returned to the State only after the mutiny was over. In 1869 the Thikana of Kushalgarh became independent of Banswara. The Maharawal emptied the State treasury with his extra-vagant habits. In 1902 the British Government intervened and handed over the administration to the Assistant Resident of Mewar. The Maharawal died in April 1905 at the age of 67.

Laxmansingh was succeeded by his son Shambhusingh who was conferred with ruling powers in 1906. He, however, abdicated the throne at the instance of the British government in 1908. The administration was

taken over by the Political Agent. Shambhusingh died in December 1913 and was succeeded by his son Prithvisingh. The latter was educated at the Mayo College, Ajmer from where he took his diploma.

On his death in 1944, Maharawal Prithvisingh was succeeded by his eldest son Chandraveersingh. He appointed Dr. Mohansingh Mehta of Udaipur as Diwan. Dr. Mehta modernized the administration and improved the financial condition of the State. The State was merged in the United State of Rajasthan in March 1948.

### **Samp-Sabha movement**

Guru Govind brought political consciousness amongst Bhils of the region in the beginning of the 20th century. He organised the Bhils of Dungarpur, Banswara, Mewar and Gujarat and established the 'Samp Sabha'. He had held the sessions of Samp Sabha every year on the Managarh hill in which thousands of Bhils and Garashiyas participated. The participants took a vow not to drink wine and settle their disputes through their own panchayats. Guru Govind also exhorted them not to do forced-labour (begar) or pay undue lag bags (cess). In this way the Bhils and Garashiyas raised their voice against the high handedness of the rulers of various States and their Jagirdars. The rulers approached the British Government to suppress the Samp Sabha movement before it was too late. In 1908 when the Bhils were holding the annual session of the Samp Sabha on the Managarh hill, the British army surrounded them and started firing indiscriminately. More than 1500 men, women and children were killed and thousands wounded. Guru Govind was arrested along with his wife. He was sentenced to death. His sentence was, however, commuted to 20 years imprisonment for fear of reaction amongst the Bhils. He was released after spending 10 years in jail.

### **Political movement**

The credit for establishing the Prajamandal in Banswara goes to the born-rebel Bhupendra Nath Trivedi, Dhulji Bhai Bhawsar and others in 1945. As its branches spread in various parts of the State, the Government imposed ban on its activities. Trivedi and Bhawsar were arrested. Strike and demonstrations followed in the capital. The Government was compelled to release the leaders just after three days. In 1947 the elections to the State Assembly were held in which Prajamandal captured 35 out of 45 seats. Shortly thereafter the Maharawal set up a popular government with Bhupendra Nath Trivedi as Chief Minister. The new government prepared a plan for development

of the State but in the meanwhile in March 1948 the State was merged with the United State of Rajasthan.

### **Economy**

The area of the State was 1946 sq. miles. It was situated in the southern most part of Rajasthan. The western part of the State was comparatively open but the rest of the State was covered with rugged hills and rocks. The main river, the Mahi, flowed in the State for about 10 miles. The river formed the boundary between Dungarpur and Banswara. Because of a number of several small rivers, the State seldom faced droughts. The average rainfall was 38 inches. More than half of the State was covered with dense jungles. The trees were teak, blackwood, pipal, salar, dhok and kadam. No benefit from the forests accrued to the State. The Bhils gradually ruined them. Unfortunately, agriculture never flourished in the State in spite of excellent soil and good rains. The reason was that the agriculturists, who were mostly Bhils, were lazy. They believed more in cutting down trees and shrubs and burning the forests rather than engaging themselves in agriculture. The main agriculture produce were maize, millet and kauri.

The average revenue of the State in 1908 was Rs. 1.75 lakhs which included Rs 85,000 from land revenue, Rs 40,000 from customs and Rs. 15,000 as tribute from Jagirdars. In 1935-36, the revenue rose to 5.96 lakhs. The major sources were land revenue (Rs. 2.44 lakhs), customs (Rs. 1.36 lakhs) and excise (Rs. 1.46 lakhs). The expenditure in the year was Rs. 4.23 lakhs. The biggest item of expenditure, which amounted to Rs. 1.35 lakhs was on the ruler's house-hold. The amount spent on education was Rs. 11,000 while on public work Rs. 5,000.

The land revenue system was primitive. In some cases the demand was fixed, in others the same was determined after assessing the crops. The holders of jagir lands paid tribute to the State. The Jagirdars had also to perform personal service to the ruler.

The number of town and villages in the State was 1287. The population in 1881 was 1.52 lakhs. It rose to 1.80 lakhs in 1891 but came down to 1.49 lakhs in 1901 because of the great famine of 1899-1900. In 1911 the population was 1.65 lakhs. In 1921 it was 1.90 lakhs, in 1931 2.5 lakhs and in 1941, 2.59 lakhs. Two-thirds of the population consisted of the scheduled tribes mainly Bhils and Meenas. The language spoken was Bhili or Vagadi. In 1901 only 2 percent of the total population was literate. There were only 4 primary schools with 250 boys. By 1908 the State had 14 schools attended by 400 boys.

## (4) Pratapgarh

### History

Soon after Maharawal Sanwatsingh signed the subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in October 1818, he had to surrender his powers to his son Deepsingh because of the feud between the father and the son. Deepsingh was very cruel and got a number of people killed. The E.I.C. got him arrested and put him in jail. He died in 1826. Sanwatsingh resumed the administration. On his death in 1844, his grand son Dalapatsingh succeeded him. In the mutiny of 1857 Dalapatsingh sent the State forces to Neemuch to help the E.I.C. The Marahata commander, Tantiya Tope, reached Pratapgarh where about 3000 Bhils joined him but the British infantry defeated him. Dalpatsingh died in March 1863.

On the death of Dalpatsingh, his son Udaisingh succeeded him at the age of 17 years. He was conferred with full ruling powers in December 1865. He died in February 1890 without an issue. Udaisingh's widow, Maharani Swaroop Kunwar, adopted Raghunathsingh, a scion of the Arnod family. Raghunathsingh died in 1929. As his eldest son, Mansingh, had died during his life time, he was succeeded by his grand son Ramsingh.

In 1936 the revered Thakkar Bappa visited Pratapgarh. In 1938 a local social worker, Anrit Lal Payak, established the Harijan Sewa Samiti with the inspiration from Thakkar Bappa. Payak founded the State Prajamandal in 1946. After India became independent, Payak was included in the State Cabinet as Minister. In March 1948 Pratapgarh was merged with the United State of Rajasthan.

### Administration

The area of the State was 886 square miles. It was bounded on the north and north-west by Mewar, on the south and south-west by Banswara, on the south by Ratlam and on the east by Jawara. The State was governed by the ruler with the assistance of a Diwan under the overall supervision of the Political Agent.

The State was divided into three districts, viz. Magara, Pratapgarh and Sagthali each in charge of a Hakim who, in addition to executive and revenue powers, enjoyed limited judicial powers also. The appeals against the judgements of the Hakim in the judicial side were heard by the Sadar-Adalat. The highest court in the State was Raj-Sabha consisting of 11 members nominated by the rulers.

## **Economy**

The number of villages in the State was 430. The only town was the capital, Pratapgarh. The population of the State in 1891 was 88000, in 1901, 52000, in 1911, 63,000, in 1921, 67,000, in 1931, 77,000 and in 1941, 92,000. The fall in population in 1901 was due to the great famine of 1899-1900. Nearly 22 percent of the population was that of the Bhils. The only river in the State was the Jakham which flew through north west of the State. The average rain-fall was 34 inches. The people mostly depended on agriculture. There was hardly any industry in the state.

The principal exports from the State were foodgrain and opium and imports were cloth and salt. The trade was mostly with Bombay. The salt was, of course, obtained from Sambhar. There was no railway in the State. The nearest railway station Mandsor, on the Rajputana-Malwa Railway, was 20 miles away from Pratapgarh town.

There were three kinds of land tenures in the State, viz., Khalasa, Chakarana and Dharmada. Khalasa land was the property of the State and was leased on royatwari system. Chakarna lands were granted to the Rajputs and officials for the duties performed. The lands granted to Brahmins, Charans, Bhats and the temples were called Dharmada. No land revenue was levied on Chakarana or Dharmada lands nor could these lands be mortgaged or sold. The first regular settlement operation too place in 1905-06. The assessment per acre varied from 8 annas to Rs. 1/8 for dry lands and Rs. 2/8 to Rs. 17/8 for wet lands. The revenue was collected mostly in cash.

The total revenue of the State was Rs. 6 lakhs in 1936. The main sources of revenue were land revenue (Rs. 2.2 lakhs), customs (Rs. 1.63 lakhs) and Mushkarat (Rs. 1.06 lakhs). The main items of expenditure were, royal family (Rs. 65,000), tribute to British government (Rs.36,000), P.W.D. (Rs. 63,000), Hospitals (10,000) and education (Rs. 25,000).

## **(5) Shahpura**

### **History**

The tiny state of Shahpura was under the dual control of the British Government as well as Mewar. The Phoolia pargana, later on known as Shahpura pargana, was conferred on Sujansingh Sisodia, the founder of the house of Shahpura, by the Mughal Emperor Shahjahan in December 1631. The other paragana, Kachchola, was given to Raja

Bharatsingh by Maharana Sangram Singh II of Mewar in 1718. The hereditary title of 'Raja Dhiraj' was conferred on Amarsingh by Maharana Bhimsingh of Mewar for his liquidating the gangs of decoits which had troubled Mewar for long. Amarsingh's reign lasted from 1796 to 1827.

Amarsingh was succeeded by his son Madhosingh. As he failed to pay tribute to the British Government, the latter forfeited the Phoolia pargana in 1829. Madhosingh, however, got it back after four years through the good offices of Maharana Jawansingh.

On Madhosingh's death in 1845, his son Jagatsingh succeeded him at the age of 8. He died in 1853 without an issue. He was succeeded by Laxmansingh, a scion of Kanechan family. He managed the affairs so badly that the Political Agent of Hadoti started for Shahpura in November 1869 to personally warn him but on his way he heard that Laxmansingh had breathed his last. The Political Agent returned to Hadoti.

Since Laxmansingh had no issue, the Jagirdars of the State with the approval of the British Government, put Naharsingh of Dhanop on the throne in June 1870. Naharsingh was about 15 years old at the time of his succession. He was conferred with ruling powers in 1876. He transformed his poor State into a prosperous one. He constructed two big irrigation tanks, viz. Naharsagar and Ummedsagar. The British Government conferred on him the salute of 9 guns. He raised the income of the State to Rs. 5 lakhs.

In 1833 Naharsingh invited Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the Founder of Arya Samaj, to Shahpura. Swamiji stayed there for 3 months as the guest of the ruler who became his disciple. In 1910 Naharsingh declared his independence from Mewar and stopped going to Udaipur to render personal services of the Maharana. The British Government ruled that the Rajadhiraj would attend the court of the Maharana for a month in every two years. The Rajadhiraj had to bow to the decision and had also to pay a fine of Rs one lakh to the Maharana for his earlier defiance.

Naharsingh died in June 1932 at a ripe age of 78. He was succeeded by his son Ummedsingh at the age of 56. He had his education at Mayo College, Ajmer. In 1938, he surrendered the pargana of Kacchola to the Maharana and became free from the obligations of Mewar State. It was during his time that the Shahpura Prajamandal was established by social workers like Ramesh Chandra Ojha, Laxmi Narain Kantiya and Ladooram Vyas. In the 'Quit India' Movement of 1942, all the three



were arrested by the State Government. Prof Gokul Lal Asawa, who belonged to Shahpura, was arrested by the British Government and put in Ajmer Jail.

In January 1947 Rajadhiraj Ummedsingh abdicated his throne in favour of his son Sudharshan Deo. Ummedsingh was a progressive ruler. He established a high school and a municipal board at Shahpura. He appointed a committee under the chairmanship of Prof. Asawa to frame the constitution of the State. The Asawa Committee completed its task when Sudharshandeo had assumed the ruling powers. The new ruler accepted the recommendations of the Committee and promulgated the Constitution which was completely democratic in character on August 14, 1947. An interim government was set up consisting of two members with Prof. Asawa as Chief Minister.

Soon after independence the Government of India decided to merge the tiny States of Kishangarh and Shahpura into the contiguous centrally administered territory of Ajmer-Merwara. The Maharaja of Kishangarh, Sumersingh, signed the instrument of merger on September 26, 1947 in the Ministry of States. On the same day the States Ministry invited Rajdhiraj of Shahpura to sign a similar instrument in respect of his State. The Rajadhiraj told the Ministry that he could do so only after consulting his Chief Minister, Prof. Asawa, as he was no more than a constitutional head. The Ministry of States threatened him that if he defied the Government of India, he should be prepared for the consequences like the Maharaja of Alwar. Sudharshandeo replied that there were serious allegations against the Maharaja of Alwar, whereas his only fault was that he had handed over his powers to a popular government. The Rajadhiraj came out of the Ministry and met his Chief Minister, Prof. Asawa and Mewar Prajamandal leader Manikyalal Varma, who were in Delhi to attend the session of the Constituent Assembly. Varma and Asawa met the Minister of States, Sardar Patel and requested him that a united state should be brought into being by merger of all the States of Rajasthan including Kishangarh and Shahpura. Great democrat as he was, Patel agreed to their suggestion and stayed the merger of the two States in Ajmer-Merwara. Later on these States were merged in the United State of Rajasthan, when it was formed in March 1948.

## **Economy**

Shahpura had an area of 405 sq. miles and a population of 74000 according to the census of 1941. Sandwiched between Ajmer Merwara and Mewar State, its economy depended on agriculture and the 'frontier trade' with its neighbours. The revenue of Shahpura in 1933 was about Rs. 5 lakhs which included Rs. 2.65 lakhs from land revenue and Rs. 54,000 from customs. The main heads of expenditure were the privy purse (Rs 1.5 lakhs) and education and health (Rs 75000). The only industry in the State was a cotton press established by the State. It gave an income of Rs. 10,000 p.a. to the State.

## **Centre of Ramsnehi cult**

Shahpura has been an all India centre of the followers of the Ram Snehi cult. The founder of the cult was Mahatma Ramcharandas who established Ramdwara here in 1751. The Ramdwara math has branches all over northern India. The followers of the cult do not believe in idol worship. Their faith in Lord Ram is, however, unflinching. The Ramsnehi sadhus depend on the charity of their followers and remained unmarried throughout their lives.

## **(6) Jodhpur (Marwar)**

### **History**

The Jodhpur State (Marwar) became free from the Marahata menace as a result of the treaty of subsidiary alliance signed between Jodhpur and the East India Company (EIC) in January 1818. The court intrigues, however, continued unabated. In March 1818 the regent, Chhatarsingh, suddenly died throwing the ruling clique led by Mehta Akhechand in utter confusion. Mortally afraid of the possibility of the return of Maharaja Mansingh to power, the clique kept the death of the regent secret pending search of a person possessing features similar to those of the deceased. When it failed in this direction, it made out that the widow of Chhatarsingh was pregnant. To its misfortune, however, the widow herself died.

The Akhechand gang now made efforts to bring a boy from the ruling Rathor family of Idar to succeed Chhatarsingh<sup>1</sup>. In the meanwhile the E.I.C. deputed Munshi Barkat Ali to sort out matters at Jodhpur. The Munshi succeeded in persuading Mansingh to take over the

1. Shyamldas. Veer Vinod, part. II p.866-867.

administration. The reluctant Maharaja came out of seclusion on November 4, 1818 and resumed the reigns of administration after two and a half years. The plans of Akhechand to put a person of his own choice on the throne misfired.

Mansingh gradually consolidated his position vis-a-vis the Akhechand clique. He came heavily on those responsible for planning and executing the murders of his guru Ayas Dev Nath and Shinghvi Inderraj. In May, 1820 he liquidated Akhechand, Kiledar Nath Karan, Vyas Vinod Ram and several others cruelly. Having got rid of his enemies amongst the mutsaddies, Mansingh spread his net against the samants hostile to him. He confiscated the jagirs of Chandawal, Rohat, Khejadla, Nimbaj and Asopa. More arrests and killings followed in September. Even the widow of Chhatarsingh was not spared. The noses of some of the lesser lights associated with Chhatarsingh were chopped. The powerful Thakur of Pokaran, Salimsingh, quietly left Jodhpur for his jagir.

The rule of terror in the State was on such an unprecedented scale that even those samants, who escaped the wrath of the Maharaja, took shelter in the neighbouring States<sup>1</sup>. In 1823 the dispossessed samants sent their representatives to the Maharaja at the instance of the Political Agent to plead their case for return of their respective jagirs. The Maharaja got them arrested. Now the E.I.C. effectively intervened and saw to it that the jagirs confiscated by the Maharaja were restored to the pattedars. This was the beginning of the parting of ways between the Maharaja and the E.I.C.

Mansingh came into open conflict with the E.I.C., when the latter entered into a treaty of "subsidiary alliance" with Sirohi State. Mansingh's objection was that Sirohi paid 'Khiraj' to Jodhpur and hence the E.I.C. could not enter into treaty with Sirohi over his head. The contention of the Maharaja had weight. His protest was, however, ignored.

In 1829 Mansingh gave shelter to Appa Sahab Bhonsale, the dethroned ruler of Nagpur. He refused to hand him over to the British Government despite the persistent demand by the Governor General, Lord William Bentick. With his encouragement the Naths became supreme in the State. While his guru Ayash Bhim Nath ran the administration, his followers indulged in looting various parts of the State without late or hinderance. Even the samants were afraid of them. The A.G.G., Southernland, advised Mansingh to discipline the Naths. The later

<sup>1</sup> Dr. Padamja Sharma, "Jodhpur Ke Maharaja Mansingh-aur-Unka Kal." p.110.

however, ignored his advice. Souherland marched on Jodhpur with a big force. Finding that it was difficult to face the British army, Mansingh surrendered and handed over the Jodhpur fort to Southerland. The A.G.G. set up a council consisting of samants and mutsaddies to run the administration. When he found that calm was restored in the State, he handed over the fort back to Mansingh.

The Naths raised their heads again. The A.G.G. consequently confiscated the jagirs of the leading Naths of Mahamandir and Udaimandir. The Maharaja, however, passed on the income of the jagirs to them. This encouraged the Naths to indulge in anti-social activities. They forcibly converted a number of people to their creed. In 1843 two young Naths got hold of a Brahmin girl. This was the last straw on the camel's back. The Political Agent, Cap. Ladloo, arrested both the culprits and despatched them to Ajmer. This upset the Maharaja. He left the palace and went away to Mandor where he started living like a hermit. He died there on September 8, 1843 without an heir. His three sons including Chhatarsingh had died during his life time.

The Political Agent, in consultation with the widows of Mansingh, put Takhatsingh of Idar on the throne on Dec. 1, 1843. The new Maharaja remained faithful to the East India Company. In 1857 the sepoy mutiny broke out in the country. The Jodhpur Legion located at Eranpura rose in revolt in response to the call of their comrades in the British army. They reached Ahuwa on their way to Delhi. Here they were joined by a number of samants led by Kushalsingh Champawat of Ahuwa. Their strength now rose to 6000.

On the request of the A.G.G., the Maharaja sent his army to Ahuwa. The rebels defeated the State army and confiscated their arms, ammunitions and large amount of money. On hearing this the A.G.G. marched to Ahuwa alongwith the British army. He too met the same fate. The mutineers of the Jodhpur legion left for Delhi according to their original plan leaving Chanpawat and his followers behind. They were, however, defeated by the British army at Narnol.

In January 1858 the Governor General, Lord Kenning, sent British forces to Ahuwa and crushed the small force led by Kushalsingh. About two dozens of Kushalsingh's followers were executed and Ahuwa was ravaged. Kushalsingh himself escaped to Mewar and took shelter in Kothariya. The Maharana of Mewar granted an allowance of Rs 1000 per month to Kushalsingh during his stay in Mewar. The mutiny hero

died at Udaipur. The Jodhpur Government confiscated, wholly or partly, the jagirs of various samants who had taken part in the rising.

Maharaja Takhatsingh was a weak ruler. His second son Jorawarsingh rose in revolt and occupied Nagaur. It was only with the help of the Political Agent that he could remove him from there. Ultimately the British government handed over the State's administration to his eldest son Jashwantsingh. The Maharaja died a few months later.

Soon after ascending the throne in 1873, Jashwantsingh II appointed Faizullah Khan as his chief minister on the advice of the political department. Khan succeeded in creating a rift between Maharaja and his youngest brother, Pratapsingh. The latter went away to Jaipur. When the Maharaja realised his mistake he recalled him and appointed him as Musahib Ala. Pratapsingh suppressed the samants with a heavy hand and established a firm control over them. He also liquidated several gangs of dacoits committing robberies on Mewar border.

In 1882 Swami Dayanand Saraswati, the founder of Arya Samaj, visited Jodhpur. The Maharaja and his brother Pratapsingh came under his influence. A branch of Arya Samaj was established at Jodhpur. Urdu was replaced by Hindi as a court language and the State officials were obliged to wear swadeshi clothes. Vedic pathshala, Kanya pathshala and Anathalaya were established at the instance of Swamiji. It is said that a prostitute, who was close to the Maharaja, poisoned Swamiji through his cook. Some time later Swamiji died at Ajmer. Though the story of administering poison to Swamiji is still popular, a section of people continues to challenge its veracity.

On the death of Maharaja Jaswantsingh in 1895, his eldest son Sardarsingh, succeeded to the throne. He was then only 16 years old. Pratapsingh, who was knighted by the British Government, was appointed as regent. In 1901 Sir Pratap became ruler of Idar. Meanwhile Sardarsingh had become major and invested with full ruling powers by the British Government.

In 1903, the powers of the Maharaja were suspended by the Political Department following charges of "maladministration". The powers were, however, restored partially in 1905, on the assurance of the Maharaja that he would be loyal to the British Government. Sardarsingh now became completely subservient to the British. He warned his subjects against associating themselves with "sedicious" activities in the wake of agitation in the country on account of partition

of Bengal. He also proscribed newspapers which spread "hatred" against the paramount power. He died in March 1911.

Sardarsingh was succeeded by his son Sumersingh. As he was minor, Sir Pratap was recalled from Idar and appointed as regent. In 1914 the first world war broke out. Sir Pratap placed the services of the Jodhpur lancers at the disposal of the British Government and he himself actively participated in the war. While the war was still on, Sumersingh died without an issue in October 1918. His younger brother Umedsingh, who was 16 years old, succeeded him. A Regency Council was set up with Sir Pratap as the President of the Council.

In 1920 the State Government introduced British weights and measures in place of local ones. This caused resentment amongst the people specially in the trading community. The Marwar Seva Sangh led by the late Chand Mal Surana launched an agitation against the measure. The capital observed complete hartal for several days. The State Government had to withdraw the new weights and measures. It was the first victory of the people against the might of the State. Surana later founded the Marwar Hitkarni Sabha to promote social and economic interests of the people. One of the active members of the Sabha was Jai Narain Vyas, who later on played a leading part in the struggle for responsible government in the State.

In 1922 the Hitkarni Sabha launched an agitation against the export of cows and she goats from the State. The State government had to ban the export after prolonged agitation for about two years. In 1925 the Sabha demanded the removal of the Mushahab Ala, Sukhdeo Prasad Kak. The agitation, which was restricted to the capital, failed. Chandmal Surana and his two colleagues were externed from the State and a number of workers including Jai Narain Vyas and Anand Raj Surana were put under police surveillance. It was after several months that the ban on Surana and his colleagues on their entry into Marwar was lifted and the police surveillance on others was withdrawn.

The first political movement in Jodhpur took place in 1928 when the Marwar Hitkarini Sabha decided to call a session of the Marwar Rajya Lok Parishad. The State Government imposed a ban on the proposed session and arrested Jai Narain Vyas, Anand Raj Surana and Bhanwar Lal Sharraf. They were tried by a special court held in Nagaur fort. The court sentenced Vyas to six years imprisonment and others to two to five years imprisonment. All of them were, however, released by March 1931.

At the Haripura session of the Indian National Congress, it was decided that the political organisations might also be established in the princely States. Some public spirited workers of Jodhpur founded 'Marwar Lok Parishad' in May 1938. The object of the Parishad was to establish responsible government in the State under the aegis of the Maharaja. Jai Narain Vyas, whose entry into Marwar was banned in July 1937, returned to Jodhpur and took over the leadership of the Parishad.

In February 1940 the Parishad decided to hold a meeting of the 'Rajputana States people's conference. The State Government declared the Parishad unlawful and arrested seven of its workers including Vyas. The arrests led to an agitation by the Prishad in which several workers were put behind bars. Ultimately an understanding was reached between the State government and Vyas. The later agreed that nothing would be done which would adversely affect the war efforts. The Government on its part released all political workers from jail.

In 1941 elections were held for the Municipal Council of Jodhpur. The Parishad captured majority of the seats and Vyas was elected as Chairman of the Council. The relations between the Government and the Parishad deteriorated as the government started interfering in the day-today affairs of the Council. In protest, the Parishad boycotted the elections to the State's Advisory Council. It also started agitation for the removal of the Prime Minister, Sir Donald Field and immediate establishment of responsible government. Vyas and other members of the Parishad resigned from the Council on May 25, 1942. Vyas was arrested the next day. Hundreds of workers courted arrest. In the meanwhile the Indian National Congress launched the Quit India Movement under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi on August 8, 1942. This gave a philip to the movement launched by the Parishad. Some 400 people were arrested. They were released in May 1944.

In October 1945 Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru visited Jodhpur. On his advice Maharaja Ummedsingh replaced Sir Donald Field by Venkajachari as Prime Minister. This helped improve relations between the Lok Parishad and the State Government.

Ummedsingh died in June 1947 and was succeeded by his son Hanuwantsingh. In the same month, the British Government announced its plan to transfer power to Indian hands and simultaneously partitioned the Indian subcontinent into two states viz. India and Pakistan. It gave option to princely states to accede either to India or to Pakistan or remain independent. The Maharaja met Mohammad Ali Jinnah, the Governor

General designate of Pakistan, and obtained assurance that if Jodhpur acceded to Pakistan, it would enjoy full autonomy. The Maharaja wanted the rulers of Jaisalmer, Mewar, Indore, and Baroda also to accede to Pakistan. Maharana of Mewar, Bhupalsingh, rejected his advice and acceded to India. Gradually the other rulers also declined the invitation of Hanuwantsingh. Ultimately V.P. Menon, Secretary, Ministry of States and the Governor-General Lord Mountbatten prevailed upon the Maharaja to accede to India. The Maharaja signed the instrument of accession on August 11, 1947.

In October 1947 the Maharaja dismissed Venkatachari as Prime Minister and appointed his own uncle Ajitsingh in his place. The Council of Ministers was packed with feudal elements. The Marwar Lok Parishad criticised the action of the Maharaja and threatened to launch agitation unless the Government was democratised. Sardar Patel intervened and consequently the Lok Parishad leader Jai Narain Vyas formed a new ministry which included the representatives of Lok Parishad and the Jagirdars. In March 1949 Jodhpur was merged in Rajasthan.

### **The Jagir system**

The members of the ruling family and the rulers were held in high esteem by the people. The ruler was considered as a demi-god. Whenever a ruler died the entire male population of the State shaved their heads and beards. Next to the ruler in importance were the samants or the Jagirdars. They were divided into three categories. viz. the Rajvis, the nobles and sardars and the mutsaddis.

The Rajvis belonged to the first order. They were 12 in number and all of them were connected by blood with the ruling Rathor family. The Chanpawats of Pokran and Ahuwa and Kumpawats of Asop amongst them, however, enjoyed precedence over others. They were entitled to double tazim. The nobles and sardars, who were Rathores were known as 'Sirayats' while those belonging to other clans were called 'Ganayats'. The Sirayats as well as the Ganayats enjoyed single tazim. They were granted the honour of 'Hath Ka Kurab'. The Mutsaddis belonged to the third category and were known as 'Bavpasav'. They enjoyed single tazim like the nobles. The ruler received nazars and nicharawals from the tazimi sardars while standing. In the case of others he received it while sitting.

The Jagirdars had 87 percent of the State's territory under their sway. The holding of a Jagirdar was called 'Thikana'. The holding varied from jagir to jagir. While the annual income of some of the Jagirdars



exceeded Rs one lakh, other had only one or two villages. The petty jagirs were transferred to the State ownership in 1884 and their holders were paid fixed pensions. The law of promigiture was applicable amongst the Jagirdars also. The permission of the ruler was necessary in case of adoption but on the failure of the line of the original grantee the jagir lapsed to the State according to the doctrine of 'Morushala'. This doctrine was formally incorporated in the adoption-rules of 1895.

The tazami sardars were exempted from court fee and court attendance as witnesses. When a tazami sardar was charged with a criminal offence he was given a chair in the court. Another privilege enjoyed by these sardars was to receive 'Khash rukkas' with the sign manual of the ruler on occasions like royal ceremonies or darbars. The sardars enjoyed autonomy within their jagirs. Their only obligation to the State was to make available their militia and pay annual 'rekh' and the 'Hukumnama' at the time of succession to the jagir. They were responsible for maintaining law and order in their respective jagirs. In fiscal matters they had extensive authority. They fixed land-revenue and imposed lag-bags of various types and took begar from their subjects without any remuneration. The Jagirdars enjoyed unfettered civil and criminal powers and it was not until 1882 that their powers were defined.

There were religious jagirs also in the State. Generally such jagirs belonged to the dieties. The priests were only managers. But the heads of Nath sect enjoyed religious jagirs in their own names. No tax or levy was imposed on such religious jagirs. Sir Pratap, however, imposed levy on the jagirs held by the Nathas. The Brahmins, who performed rituals for the royal family were also granted jagirs. Originally they too did not pay any rekha or tax to the State. Sir Pratap imposed rekha on them.

### **The Society**

The Brahmins were considered superior to any other caste in social hierarchy. They formed nearly 10% of the total population of the State. They not only performed rituals in the ruling family and held jagirs in lieu of this duty but also occupied important positions in the State administration.

Being warriors, the Rajputs dominated the society. As stated earlier some leading Rajputs held jagirs. The State army consisted of Rajputs only till Jats were introduced in the early forties of this century. The use of drinks and opium was common amongst them. Polygamy amongst them was a rule rather than an exception.

The Jats were the most powerful agriculturist class. They constituted about 11% of the State's population. Their main strongholds were the districts of Jodhpur and Nagaur. Widow marriage was acceptable in the community. Even divorce was permissible. Their main diety was Teja, the folk-god. They held fair at Parbatsar in Teja's name every year.

The Oswals, mostly jains, formed 9% of State's population. They virtually dominated the State administration and served as Dewans, Ministers, Hakims and Commanders during the Mughal and the British periods. The Kayasthas were known as good munshis but some of them rose to higher positions as well. They enjoyed the highest percentage of literacy in the State. The community feeling was the strongest amongst them, though other castes were not free from this disease.

The Charan community, though small, had the privilege of being closest to the rulers since centuries. They were chroniclers of the State. The community produced renowned poets in Dingal. Their poetry inspired the rulers and their commanders on the battle field in the days gone-by. They were, however, notorious in realising 'dapa' from the Rajputs on the occasion of marriage of their daughters to an extent that often poor Rajputs killed their female infants soon after they were born.

### **Administrative set-up**

The ruler was assisted by a chief executive known as Pradhan. The office of the Pradhan was originally held by senior Thikanedars like Ahuwa, Asop, Pokran, Nimaj and Kuchaman. These Pradhans were so powerful that often the ruler was puppet in their hands. Things changed during the British rule in India.

In 1868 the A.G.G. entered into an arrangement with the Maharaja of Jodhpur, according to which a 'Ministry' was established at Jodhpur at a cost of Rs. 15 lakhs per year. The Ministry not only ran public administration but also exercised civil and criminal jurisdiction in the Khalsa area. In 1878 Maharaja Jaswantsingh appointed his uncle Pratapsingh (Sir Pratap) as Prime Minister.

Next to Pradhan was the Diwan who looked after the finances and revenue of the State. Then there was a commander-in-chief known as Bakshi. He performed civil and as well as military functions. The Diwans and Bakshis were generally outside the Thakur class. Since the forts had strategic importance their commanders, known as 'Kiledars',

occupied a pride of place in the set-up. The 'Vakil' represented the State at the Delhi Court and later on at Ajmer and Abu. All negotiations between the State and the Central power were conducted through the Vakil.

In 1930s Maharaja Unmed Singh established a 'State Council' with himself as President. It consisted of a Chief Minister, a Councillor to the Maharaja and 5 other Ministers. The Chief Minister and other Ministers had one or more departments under them. Apart from policy decisions, all important matters were decided by the Council. Earlier the functions of the Finance Department were performed by the State Accountant General. These functions were later on transferred to the newly established Finance Department under the Finance Minister.

The State was divided into 22 parganas. Each pargana was in charge of a Hakim who exercised not only executive powers but also discharged judicial functions. Appeals against the decisions of the Hakims on the judicial side lay before the Judicial Superintendents who enjoyed the powers of a District and Sessions Judge. Appeals against the judgement of the judicial Superintendent lay before the Chief Court at Jodhpur. In special cases the State Council sat as 'Ijlas Khas' and heard appeals against the decisions of the Chief Court.

### **Medium of exchange**

Maharaja Vijaysingh had introduced the Vijayshai coins in 1780 AD with the permission of the Mughal emperor Shah-Alam. The coins consisted of a rupee and eight anna and four anna pieces. The obverse side of the coin contained the name of the ruler of the State together with the symbols of a tree, preferably a Khejri and a sword and the inverse side the name of the Mughal Emperor. In 1850 the name of Queen Victoria was substituted for the Mughal Emperor obviously because of change of guards at Delhi. Gradually the British Indian coins replaced the local coins.

### **Transport & Communications**

The State had 41 miles of painted roads, 333 miles of metalled roads and 1100 miles of gravel roads by 1945-46. The road mileage was obviously inadequate for as big a state as Jodhpur. The deficiency, however, was made up by the network of railway constructed by the State Government from 1882 to 1886. A beginning in this direction was

made in 1882 with the construction of railway line from Marwar junction to Pali. By the end of 1948 the Jodhpur State Railway covered 1000 miles. The State railway system was categorized as class one in the country. The capital investment on the entire railway system in the State was Rs.6.51 crore. The net earning from the railways was Rs. 1.14 crore. The income from the Railways was thus the biggest single source of revenue to the State. Besides, the railway system gave a philip to the trade throughout the State. In spite of a net work of railways and construction of some roads, the camel continued to be the most popular means of transport, as it could go any where in the desert, road or no road and that too without needing water for days together.

The State had its own postal system. The mail was carried through camels and runners. In 1805 the Imperial postal system was introduced in the capital and at the headquarters of the districts. Gradually it was extended to other towns also. The State had its own telegraphic service initially. It was, however, replaced by the Imperial telegraphic system a few years later.

### **Education & Health**

In the field of education, the State had a post graduate collage and a girls college at Jodhpur. There were a number of High schools at Jodhpur established by various communities such as Oswals, Kayasthas, Pushkaranas etc. and aided by the State Government. There were a few High Schools in the districts but there was a net work of middle and primary schools through out the State. In 1942-43 the State spent about Rs 12 lakhs on education. The State had a well equipped general hospital and a women's hospital at Jodhpur. It had established dispensaries at all pargana headquarters and other towns. The expenditure on health institutions was about Rs. 10 lakhs per annum.

### **Management of drought**

A large part of the State was situated in the Thar desert. The rains were scanty and irregular, the average rainfall being 13" only. The State was often visited by famines and droughts. The famines of 1812-13, 1868-69, 1877-78 and 1899 were the severest. During droughts, the crops failed and consequently foodgrains and fodder became scarce. A large number of people and cattle migrated from the State. In the famine of 1899-1900 nearly one and a half million cattle perished. The human toll exceeded 6 lakhs. Since droughts in one part or the other were a common

feature in the State, the Government became specialised in managing migration of human and animal population and organising relief to the extent possible. The famine code adopted by it became a model for the successor Government of Rajasthan.

### **The Economy**

One of the main sources of income of the State was land revenue. The assessment of land revenue varied from pargana to pargana. It was, however, one third of actual produce generally. In the desert area it was one fourth. In addition to land revenue some other cesses were levied in cash and kind. The land revenue was mostly collected in kind by 'lata-kunta' or 'mukata'. The jagirdars paid rekh at 8% of the gross rental value of the land held by them. No land revenue was charged on 'sasan' land granted for charitable purposes. The land given to Rajputs in lieu of their military and security services was called 'bhom'. The land revenue of the State in 1885 was about Rs. 7 lakhs. In 1915 it rose to Rs. 13 lakhs and in 1941 to Rs. 24 lakhs.

The revenue from salt accounted for Rs. 15 lakhs annually which was received directly from the Government of India consequent to their acquisition of the salt-lakes in the State. Another important source of revenue was 'sayer' or customs. In 1882 the Customs Department was reorganised. All sorts of duties including customs and excise were abolished and only 'frontier-duty' on goods imported into and in transit through the State was retained. While fixing the tariffs it was specially kept in view that duties on essential articles were kept low. In 1890 the duties of customs were extended to jagir areas in lieu of which the jagirdars were given a fixed amount annually. In that year it gave an income of Rs. 45 lakhs as compared to the land revenue of Rs. 24 lakhs.

The total State revenue in 1887-88 was Rs. 46 lakhs. In 1896-97 it was Rs. 50 lakhs, in 1915-16 Rs. 88 lakhs and in 1942-43 Rs. 218 lakhs. The quantum jump in the revenue between 1915-1916 and 1942-43 was mainly because of fast development of the railway system. According to the Administrative Reports of the State, wheat, bajra, barley and jowar were sold at the rate of 10.2 seers, 12.7 seers, 14.8 seers and 13.6 seers per rupee respectively in 1896-97. Practically the same prices ruled till 1935-36 except during famines. In the course of the second world war the prices of food grains suddenly shot up. In 1943, wheat

was sold at 3.38 seers, barja 6.8 seers, barley 4.4 seers and jowar 6.12 seers per rupee.

The State possessed rich marble and building-stone mines. The marble of Makarana was exported to other parts of the country. The world famous Taj Mahal at Agra was built with the Makrana marble. The other mines were those of gypsum and fullers earth.

The sheep was, perhaps, the best friend of the people of Marwar. It thrived even in the desert notwithstanding the recurring droughts and famines. It provided not only milk, ghee and meat but valuable wool too which supplemented the income of poor farmers. The sheep rearing was generally in the hands of Gujars and Khatiks and the nomadic Rebaris. At the time of merger the State had 25 lakhs of sheep which produced 60 lakh pounds of wool. The scientific sheering and grading of wool had started in the State early in the 19th century. The wool produced in the State was considered superior to that produced in other parts of the country. Every year the State exported wool worth Rs. 50 lakhs to Liverpool and other centres of industry in England. The wool industry provided work to hundreds of families. The articles produced from wool were carpets, blankets, felts, namada, ghooxies etc. The above articles were manufactured in cottage or small scale industries. Apart from serving as an important mode of transport, the camel also contributed to the income of household by way of producing wool.

The leather industry in Marwar flourished because of large cattle population and high incidence of their deaths during droughts. There were several tanneries in Jodhpur and other towns like Bali and Erinpura. In villages the indigenous method of tanning was employed by certain castes like Chamars, Bhambis, Regars and Khatiks. The leather articles produced locally were jooties, saddles, belts, suit-cases, charas (buckets), seaths, etc. Ofcourse the major part of the hides and skins were exported to Agra, Kanpur, Delhi etc.

One of the important traditional industry in the State was calico-printing. The industry flourished in Pali, Jodhpur, Badhmer and Balotra on small scale basis. The calico printing included stamping, tie-dyeing and gold and silver printing on cloth. The 'chundri' of Jodhpur was popular throughout north India. Pali, which was a famous international trade route in ancient India, was an important centre of calico-printing.

The only large scale industry in the State was the Maharaja Shri Ummed Mills Limited which was established at Pali in 1940s by the Bangurs. It was by far the largest textile unit in Rajasthan during those days. It had 442 looms and 19000 spindless and employed about 2500 labour. Its authorised capital was Rs.96 lakhs.

Besides wool and hides and skins, the State exported coarse cloth, oilseeds, bullocks, cows, horses and camels and animal bones. The State imported sugar, gur, opium, foodgrains, spices, dyes etc.

## **(7) Bikaner**

### **History**

The treaty of subsidiary alliance signed between the East India Company (EIC) and Maharaja Surat Singh of Bikaner in March 1818 bound the State to 'subordinate cooperation' with the British Government which in turn agreed 'to protect the territories of Bikaner and to reduce the rebellious nobles and others to obedience'. Unlike most of the princely States, Bikaner was not required to pay any tribute to the EIC under the 1818 treaty as it had not been paying any such tribute to the Marathas. The treaty guaranteed internal autonomy to the State. However, as times passed, the British Government evolved the doctrine of 'paramountcy'. The autonomy clause became redundant.

Soon after the signing of the treaty, a number of Jagirdars raised the standard of revolt against the Maharaja. The latter invoked the provision of the treaty and requested the EIC for help. The EIC despatched a strong force under General Alner. The General captured Fatehabad, Hissar, Siddhmukh, Jassana, Birkali, Churu, Surkhanian, Niniba and Sujangarh and handed them over to the Maharaja.

Ratansingh succeeded Maharaja Surat Singh in April 1828 on the latter's death. The first formal warning from the EIC to the new Maharaja came the same year saying that Bikaner should steer clear of any relations with Dhukul Singh, the pretender to the Jodhpur throne<sup>1</sup>. During Ratansingh's regime the Bhatias of Jaisalmer took away a number of camels from the Bikaner territory. The Bikaner State used force against Jaisalmer. The military action, however, did not succeed. It was after the intervention of Maharana Jawarsingh of Mewar that the matter was amicably settled between the rulers of the two States.

From 1832 to 1857 the entire territory of Bikaner continued in a state of lawlessness<sup>2</sup>. The disgruntled nobility assisted by bandits created

1. Karnisingh. *The Relations of the House of Bikaner with Central powers*, p.134

2. Karnisingh. *Ibid*, p. 143.

a law and order situation in the State to the extent that even the assistance of the British troops proved of little consequence. The notorious decoits, Doongarsingh and Jawaharsingh, created havoc in the State. The devil-daring dacoits had looted the government treasury at Agra and Nassirabad also. At the instance of the EIC the Maharaja passed a law against female infanticide amongst the Rajputs and ordered that the expenditure on marriages among them should be proportionate to their income. The Maharaja also restricted the amount of 'tyag' demanded by the Charans on the occasion of marriages of Rajput girls. The Maharaja died in August 1851.

Sardar Singh succeeded his father Ratansingh. He introduced several reforms. He imposed restrictions on feasts on occasions of marriages and deaths. He banned 'Sati' and 'Samadhi' at the instance of Lord Bentick, the then Governor General of India. In 1857, the mutineers overran Sirsa, Hissar and Hansi. The Maharaja extended full military support to the EIC in suppressing the revolt in these areas. At the end of the mutiny the grateful EIC rewarded the Maharaja by granting him 41 villages in Tibi area.

In 1868 Captain Powlett was appointed as assistant to the AGG with head-quarters at Sujangarh much against the wishes of the Maharaja. He brought about a settlement between various Thakurs and the Maharaja as a result of which the villages confiscated by the Maharaja were restored to the Thakurs. The Maharaja died in May 1872 without a male issue. Senior Maharani Bhatyani favoured the adoption of Doongar Singh, a descendant of Chatarsingh, the second son of the late Maharaja Gajsingh but the junior Maharani Pugalani preferred Jaswantsingh, another descendant of Chatarsingh. However, on the advice of Maharana Shambhusingh of Mewar, the British Government approved the adoption of Doongarsingh.

The new Maharaja carried on the administration with the assistance of his Diwan Pandit Manphool. Meanwhile, some of the Thakurs and others made complaints to the Political Agent about the 'maladministration' in the State. The Governor-General warned the Maharaja to set things right and introduce necessary reforms in the State. In December 1873 Pandit Manphool resigned as Diwan. The Maharaja appointed his father Lalsingh as President of the Council in place of Jaswant Singh Baid.



In 1879 the salt agreement was signed between Bikaner and the Government of India, according to which salt was to be manufactured at Chhapar and Loonkaransar only and the annual production of salt was not to exceed 35000 maunds. For these restrictions the British Government agreed to compensate the State to the extent of Rs. 6000 per annum. In 1882 the amount of *Rekh* in case of each Jagirdar was fixed for 21 years in consultation with the leading Thakurs. Some of them, however, challenged the decision of the Maharaja who sent his army against them. The fort of Bidasar was razed to the ground and some of the hostile Jagirdars were arrested.

In 1883 the Viceroy, Lord Rippon, appointed Cap. Talbot as Resident / Political Agent and advised the Maharaja 'to consult him freely'. The Maharaja appointed Ami Mohammad as his Diwan as recommended by Talbot. He also appointed some outsiders to replace the local officials. The police department was reorganised. The civil and criminal laws were codified and separate law courts were established. The civil and criminal powers enjoyed by some Jagirdars were withdrawn. A regular excise department was set up. A comprehensive land settlement was conducted. A system of annual budgeting was introduced. In 1886 the capital town of Bikaner was electrified for the first time. The administration was conducted by a council under the direct guidance of the Maharaja. Gradually, however, differences started cropping between the Maharaja and the Political Agent on several issues. In 1887, the Viceroy, Lord Dufferin, wrote to the Maharaja that the affairs of the State were not being conducted in accordance with the wishes of the Government of India. He warned him that if he acted contrary to the advice of the Political Agent, it would lead to results extremely distasteful to him.

The Maharaja died in August 1887. He was succeeded by his brother Ganga Singh at the age of 7. The Government of India set up a Regency Council with Col. Thorton, Resident-Political Agent, as President. It was during the minority administration that an agreement between the British Government and the Bikaner State was signed to construct a railway line between Bikaner and Jodhpur.

Gangasingh attained majority in 1898. The interference of the Political Agent, however, continued. The British Government in fact imposed restriction on the powers of the Maharaja to the effect that the

approval of the Political Agent must be obtained before any change was introduced in the administration and that the Maharaja would not act against the advice of the Political Agent in any important matter<sup>1</sup>. The political agent, thus, became virtually a super ruler. The matter came to a head when Jagirdars of Bidasar, Ajitpura and Gopalpura were charged by the Maharaja for conspiring against the State. The Maharaja confiscated a village of Thakur Hukumsingh of Bidasar and resumed the entire Jagir for three years. He deposed Thakur Bhairon Singh of Ajitpura and kept him under surveillance. He also forfeited half of the jagir of Ajitpura. He confiscated a village of Thakur Ramsingh of Gopalpura and placed the jagir under the court of wards till further orders.

The three Jagirdars made a representation to the Governor General, Lord Curzon, who advised the Maharaja to reduce the punishment. The Maharaja made a submission to the Governor General for reconsideration. The Governor-General ultimately relented. He agreed that the Maharaja's original orders would stay. The Maharaja's stand was thus vindicated. The pin pricks of the Political Agent, however, continued. Meanwhile the Maharaja succeeded in establishing rapport with highest echelons in the British Government. He participated along with his regiment in the China war in 1900 on the side of the British Government. He was awarded China Medal by King Edward VII in 1902 for his services to the British Government. He also sent his "Ganga-Rishala" in the Somaliland campaign in 1902. As a result of these services coupled with his contacts with Viceroy and the Imperial family, the Maharaja succeeded in getting the post of the Political Agent abolished in 1910. In 1919 the State Government was allowed to deal with the A.G.G. directly.

In 1914 the world War I broke out. Ganga Singh placed the services of his troops as well as his own at the disposal of the British Government. In recognition of these services, the British government raised his personal salute from 17 to 19 guns. He participated in the Imperial Conference held in London in 1917, where he pleaded India's case for political reforms. He also participated in the deliberations of the Imperial War Council and the War Cabinet.

Maharaja Gangasingh was a great exponent of the rights of the princes and their "sovereign status". No wonder he became the first Chancellor of the Chamber of Princes when it was founded in February

1. Karni singh, *Ibid.* p.183.

1921. At the first Round Table conference held in 1931 in London to discuss the future system of Government in India, the Maharaja while welcoming the proposal of federation with legitimate safeguards for the princes, affirmed his faith 'in the greatness of India with the greatness of princes'<sup>1</sup>. Curiously, however, when the federal scheme was brought into being in 1938-39 under the Government of India Act 1935, Gangasingh was one of the princes who refrained from joining the federation on the ground that the entry of the princes into the federation "would be tantamount to encouraging the subversive movements whose objective was to wean away the people of the States from the loyalty they owed to the rulers"<sup>2</sup>.

While Gangasingh talked of self-government in India within the British empire, he was a despot in his own State. He would not permit his 'subjects' even to put on a Gandhi cap. He prohibited the entry of Seth Jamanlal Bajaj in his State. He had suspended a member of a municipality because he had the temerity to hoist the National Flag in Churu on January 26, 1930.

In 1931 the Maharaja imposed tax on foodgrains. Some public spirited workers like Swami Gopaldas, Chandanmal Bahad and Satya Narain Advocate raised their voice against the imposition of the tax. This was followed by the release of a printed memorandum duly signed by thousands of people. It listed a number of high handed actions of the Maharaja in suppressing civil liberties in the State. These leaflets were distributed in London also where the Maharaja was attending the Round Table Conference. The Maharaja cut short his visit and returned to Bikaner. Chandanmal Bahad, Satya Narain and several others were arrested on charges of sedition. The accused were sentenced from 3 months to 7 years rigorous imprisonment<sup>3</sup>.

In 1936 Magharam Vaidya, a social worker, tried to establish Prajamandal in the State. He was externed from the State for a period of six years. In 1942, Raghuvar Dayal Goyal, an Advocate, founded the Bikaner Praja Parishad. He too was externed. Goyal however, entered the State in defiance of the ban a few weeks later. He was arrested and sentenced to one year's imprisonment. One Nemichand Anchalia wrote an article in a weekly of Ajmer in which he criticised the Maharaja for

1. Karni Singh, *Ibid.* p. 240

2. Karni Singh, *Ibid.* p.240

3. B.L. Panagariya, *Rajasthan Mai Swatantra Sangram.* p. 40-41.

suppressing civil liberties in the State. He was sentenced to 7 years rigorous imprisonment.

Maharaja died in February 1943. He was succeeded by his son Sardul Singh. The latter released most of the political prisoners from Jail. Talks were held between the Maharaja and Raghuvardyal Goyal for recognition of the Praja Parishad. The talks however, failed and some of the workers of the Parishad were put behind bars. Goyal was externed from the State. In June 1946, Goyal entered the State in violation of the prohibitory orders. He was arrested. Earlier Choudhary Khumbharam had also been arrested. The Praja parishad decided to hold a political conference at Raisinghnagar. Some of the Praja Parishad workers from the neighbouring areas were coming to join the conference. The police fired on them resulting in the death of a young Harijan worker Birbal Singh.

In the meanwhile political changes of far reaching importance were taking place in the country. The Cabinet Mission had arrived in India for transfer of power to the people. The State Govt. had no option but to change its attitude towards the Praja Parishad. In July 1946 Raghuvardayal Goyal and Choudhari Kumbharam were released from jail. The office of the Praja Parishad was formally established at Bikaner.

According to the Cabinet Mission plan, the princely States were free to accede to India or to Pakistan or to remain independent. While some of the rulers planned to accede to Pakistan, the Nizam of Hyderabad and the Maharaja of Travancore declared their intentions to become independent. At this moment the Maharaja of Bikaner, Sardul Singh, displayed a rare act of statesmanship and gave a lead to the princes by signing the instrument of accession in favour of India. Two other leading States viz. Udaipur and Jaipur followed suit. This had a demoralising effect on those princes who were dreaming of independence or joining Pakistan. The remaining states in Rajasthan including Jodhpur acceded to India. Sardar Patel, the Minister of States, paid handsome tribute to the Maharaja for standing for India at this critical juncture in its history.

Originally the State Ministry had decided that only a State whose population was one million and income Rs. 10 million would be allowed to maintain its identity. The States of Udaipur, Jodhpur, Jaipur and Bikaner belonged to this category. In April 1948 Mewar voluntarily merged with the United State of Rajasthan. The States Ministry now reversed its earlier decision and decided that no princely State could be

allowed to maintain its identity notwithstanding its size, income or population. Accordingly it invited the remaining three States of Rajasthan to merge with the United State of Rajasthan. The Maharaja of Bikaner initially resisted the proposal but had ultimately to fall in line with other viable States. It became part of "Greater Rajasthan" on March 30, 1949.

### **Administrative reforms**

When Maharaja Gangasingh assumed ruling powers in 1898, the Regency Council was converted into a State Council consisting of a Diwan and some members. Departments such as army, medical and health and public works were kept by the Maharaja himself. The other departments were handled by the members. The office of the State Council was known as Mahakama Khash.

In 1902 the Mahakamakhash was converted into Secretariat. A department or a group of departments was headed by a Secretary who was responsible to the Maharaja. The post of Diwan was abolished. The State Council now functioned as a judicial and a consultative body presided over by the Maharaja himself. In 1924 the Council regained its earlier status. Its members were now designated as ministers.

Gangasingh was the first ruler in India to have introduced separate privy purse and civil list. The annual privy purse was fixed at 5% of the State revenue. In 1910 the judiciary was separated from the executive. The highest court known as Chief Court was established. Hindi was introduced as court language in place of Urdu. The Indian Penal Code and the Criminal Procedure Code were applied in the State. In 1910 the departments of customs and excise were amalgamated. The State was divided into four districts or nizamat, each under an officer called Nazim. The districts were further divided into 11 tehsile each headed by a Tehsildar.

The lowest court was that of Naib Tehsildar who was a third class magistrate and tried civil suits not exceeding Rs. 300 in value. The Tehsildar was a second class magistrate and decided civil suits not exceeding Rs. 500 in value. The Nazims were magistrates of the first class and decided suits upto Rs. 10,000. They also heard appeals against the decisions of lower courts. The Appellate Court heard appeals against the decisions of the Nazims, tried civil suits beyond their powers and could pass sentence upto 10 years of imprisonment. The State Council functioned as the highest court of appeal in judicial matters.

In 1913 a "representative" assembly was established. It consisted of 35 members comprising 6 members of the State Council, 19 nominated and 10 elected members. In 1937 the number of elected members was raised to 20. In 1920 the Cooperative Societies Act was promulgated. By 1930 the State had as many as 89 societies. In 1928 the Village Panchayat Act was enforced. The Village Panchayats were invested with civil, criminal and executive powers.

### **Demography**

The population of the State in 1891 was 8.32 lakhs. It came down to 5.84 lakhs in 1901. The decrease by nearly 30% during the decade was due to great famine of 1899. In 1911 the population was 7 lakhs. It came down to 6.75 lakhs in 1921 due to droughts during the decade. It went upto 9.63 lakhs in 1931 and to 12.92 lakhs in 1941. Caste-wise the Jats were 22%, the Brahmins 11%, the Scheduled castes 10%, the Mahajans 9% and the Rajputs 8%. The total area of the State was 23943 sq miles. The number of towns and villages was 2110.

### **Education and Health**

The literacy in the State in 1901 was 2.5 percent (Male 4.7% and female 0.2%). The number of educational institutions maintained by the State was 38. There was only one high school at Bikaner. Similarly there was only one girls' school at the State capital<sup>1</sup>. In 1941 the literacy rate was 7.18% (Male 11.28% and female 2.40%). In 1943 there were 140 Government schools, 191 private schools and one degree college. In 1905 the State had 13 hospitals and 3 dispensaries with accommodation for 191 in-patients. In 1943 the number of hospitals rose to 41. A modern hospital named as "Prince Vijaysingh Memorial Hospital" was established at Bikaner in 1943. It was one of the finest and the best equipped hospitals in northern India.

### **Land Tenure**

There were two main systems of tenure in the State, i.e. Khalsa (crown-lands) and the lands held by the grantees. The Khalsa land was 7271 sq.miles as against 16672 sq.miles held by the grantees. In other words the Khalsa land was only about 30%. In the Khalsa area, though the proprietary rights in the land were vested with the State, the occupancy tenants had full rights of transfer subject to the previous sanction of the

1. The Imperial Gazetteers of India (Rajputana), 1908. p. 415

government. No tenant could be ejected from his holding except for non-payment of rent. The tenants thus, more or less, enjoyed security.

In the Khalsa area there was no uniform system of assessment earlier. The commonest method was to assess the rent at a cash rate per bigha. Occasionally a share of produce was taken instead of cash. In some parts of the State the "ejara" system was also in force. Under this system a lumpsum assessment was fixed annually for a village and then distributed over the cultivated area. In 1884 a summary settlement was undertaken which was completed in 1886. Each village was assessed on a lumpsum basis for the payment of which the "Choudharis" were made responsible. The rates were uniform throughout the assessment circle<sup>1</sup>.

The first regular settlement was undertaken in 1892. It came into effect from 1894 for a duration of 10 years. A basic change was made in the case of the village of Suratgarh Nizamat. It was to the effect that each tenant was made responsible for payment of assessment for the land held by him. The average assessment per acre was Rs 2 to Rs. 11 on wet lands and Rs. 2.5 to Rs. 8.25 per acre in case of dry lands. However, in the case of Tibi Pargana, which became part of Bikaner State in 1857, the Zamindari system was in force. The settlement undertaken by the British Government in 1856 in these areas continued till 1883 when the State Government conducted fresh settlement.

As regards the land held by the grantees, the most part of it was held by the Jagirdars or the pattedars. They served the State with their troops in times of war. In 1868 this obligation was committed into cash in the form of tribute. It was about 1/3rd of land revenue. The pattedars held their jagirs generally on hereditary basis but on each succession the Pattedar had to pay nazarana equivalent to one year's land revenue of his jagir. The jagirs were liable to resumption by the State for serious offences committed by the holders against the State. The land granted by the State to religious institutions like temples and mosques were exempted from land revenue.

The most of the Jagirdars of Bikaner thrived on plundering. They gave shelter to the decoits and carried on raids on villages with their help. The State asked the British for help for curbing the activities of the lawless elements. The British Government, however, took indifferent attitude. The result was that the entire State remained more or less in the state of terror from 1830 to 1847<sup>2</sup>, when the forces of the East India

1. Imperial Gazetteer of India (Rajputana) 1908, p. 413

2. Karni Singh, Ibid. 141-143.

Company and those of Bikaner State restored peace and tranquility in most part of the State. The Jagirdars, however, remained a source of constant concern to the State till Maharaja Gangasingh dealt with some of the leading Thakurs with a heavy hand in 1905.

### **Indus waters**

The idea of providing irrigation to Bikaner from the Satluj by extension of Abhor canal was first mooted in 1885. The Punjab Government, however, turned down the proposal. The Central Government considered the question of extending irrigation from the Punjab rivers to Bikaner State in 1898-99 when one of the worst famines in history took place. The first Satluj Valley project drawn up in 1905 included some parts of the State. The Bahawalpur State, now part of Pakistan, raised the objection that Bikaner had no riparian rights as it had no frontage of the Satluj. The Bikaner State argued that the English riparian law was a domestic one and related to the proprietors and had no application between the two constituent units of a country. It quoted the examples of the Phulkin State and the Faridkot State which were allowed waters from the Sirhind Canal of the Satluj system. It also quoted another precedent where a non-riparian State of Jind was supplied water from the western Jamuna Canal by the Mughals. It stated that in India the Paramount power had always been the overlord of all the waters of the Indian rivers and that therefore the Government of India could make use of waters of the Punjab rivers in a manner which was in the best interests of India as a whole<sup>1</sup>. The Governments of Bahawalpur and Punjab, however, continued to resist the claim of Bikaner. Ultimately the British Government intervened and finally ruled that the surplus waters from the Satluj should be utilised without any regard to the boundaries of the British province and the princely States and that Bikaner could not be excluded from the benefit of irrigation merely on the ground that it was not a riparian State.

An agreement was signed between the parties concerned with the approval of the Secretary of State of the effect that 1000 sq. miles of area of Bikaner would be brought under irrigation under the Satluj Valley Project. The Bikaner part of the project consisted of the construction of 18 mile long concrete lined canal, 150 mile long railway line and the establishment of mandis, hospitals, schools, police stations etc. The estimated cost of the Project was Rs. 5.5 crore. The project was completed

1. Karni Singh, *Ibid*, p. 382-384.



in 1927. Maharaja Gangasingh thus fulfilled his most cherished dream and brought the Himalayan waters to his thirsty State. The canal was named after him.

The Maharaja did not rest content with the construction of the Gang canal. In 1938 he secured a firm commitment from the Government of Punjab for Bikaner's share in the Bhakra Nangal Project. Bikaner had thus firmly established its rights as a co-sharer in the waters of the Indus rivers long before the dawn of independence, thanks to the vision and statesmanship of Maharaja Gangasingh.

With the partition of the Indian sub-continent into two sovereign States, India and Pakistan, in 1947, controversy started between the two countries on the division of waters of the Indus basin rivers. In the meanwhile the Bikaner State prepared a blue print which envisaged the construction of head works at Harike just below the junction of the Satluj and the Beas rivers and a 96 mile long canal taking off from the Harike headworks in order to bring 7 million acres of desert lands of Bikaner and Jaisalmer under irrigation. The blue print proved to be the forerunner of the Indira Gandhi Canal Project. The celebrated engineer, Kanwar sen, was the brain behind the scheme.

### **Economy**

About 71% of the population was engaged in agriculture and animal husbandary. The annual rainfall in the State varied from 6" in north west to 14" in south-east and east. Even then it was irregular and the State often faced droughts. Hardly one-third of the area came under cultivation because of the desert. The principal crops sown were bajra, gram, barley, and jowar. The two Gaggar canals, which were constructed in 1896-97 at a cost of Rs. 4.7 lakhs, were 51 miles in length and irrigated about 17 sq. miles of land<sup>1</sup>.

In 1901 the income from land revenue was merely Rs. 7.5 lakhs. It went to more than Rs. 12 lakhs by 1910. The completion of the Gang Canal Project in 1927 gave a big hike to the land revenue. In 1929-30 it was Rs. 22 lakhs, by 1940-41 it was about Rs. 25 lakhs. Another source of revenue to the State was customs duty. In 1901 the revenue from this source was Rs. 5 lakhs. It rose to Rs. 14 lakhs in 1910, Rs. 17 lakhs in 1929-30 and Rs. 20 lakhs in 1940. The Railway system also added handsomely to the State revenue. In 1943 the gross annual income from the railways was Rs. 72 lakhs.

<sup>1</sup> The Imperial Gazeeter of India. p. 418.

In 1901 the total State revenue was Rs. 16.5 lakhs. It rose to Rs. 1.35 crore by 1936-37. By now the loans raised by the State for financing the Gang Canal Project and construction of railways had been fully paid off<sup>1</sup>. In spite of the several developmental activities undertaken by the State during the British period the State budgets showed substantial surpluses year after year. The State contributed an amount of Rs. 1.5 crore in the relief fund set up by the British Government during the second world war.

According to the administrative reports sent to the British Resident from time to time the foodgrains in the State were comparatively cheap. Prior to the completion of the Gang Canal in 1927-28, the rates of wheat, millets and gram were 7 seers, 8.5 seers and 9 seers per rupee respectively. In 1938 the rates for these food grains were 10 seers, 10 seers and 14 seers per rupee.

Since construction of roads was difficult in the inhospitable terrain dotted with sand dunes, the State Government took up the construction of railways. The State entered into an agreement with the Jodhpur State for construction of a railway line between Bikaner and Jodhpur. The management of the entire railways was originally vested in Jodhpur State. The Bikaner part of the railway was separated from Jodhpur and brought under the control of State Government in 1924. In addition to this the State Government constructed a network of railways throughout the length and breadth of the State. By 1943 the total railway mileage in the State was 883. With the exception of Baroda, the network of railways in Bikaner was the biggest amongst the Indian States. The total length of the roads in the State was, however, 135 miles only.

The principal mineral in the State was lignite (an inferior quality of coal). It was discovered in 1896 at Palana. The seam was over 20 feet in thickness, 250 feet below the surface and 50 feet above the water level. It employed nearly 100 labourers. The lignite was used in the State railways and the Public Works Department. Besides, there were large deposits of gypsum and fullers-earth in the State but these minerals were put to industrial use only after the formation of Rajasthan.

Bikaner was one of the important sheep and wool producing areas in the country. The State had about 12 lakhs of sheep and produced about 40 lakh pounds of wool. Sheep-farming in the State was in the hands of

1. Karni Singh, *Ibid.* p. 268

Khatiks, Raibaris, Meenas and Gujars. There were both stationary farmers as well as nomads. The wool was exported either to Punjab or to Beawar. In the State itself the wool was utilized by cottage and small scale units. The State produced tweedes, blankets, carpets, namdas etc.

In the post-war years the Bikaner Industrial Corporation Ltd. set up a sugar factory at Ganganagar with a capital of Rs. 25 lakhs and crushing capacity of 2000 tonnes of sugar annually. During the same period (1945-46), the Sardul Textile Mills Ltd. was set up with an authorised capital of Rs one crore. It had 300 looms and 15000 spindles.

Though the State was part of the Thar-desert, Maharaja Gangasingh turned it into one of the most prosperous States in Rajasthan. He brought waters of the Indus basin and converted the Ganganagar district into a granary. He spread net work of railways and connected the State with rest of the country giving a philip to the trade and industry.

### **(8) Kishangarh**

In spite of the fact that Maharaja Kalyansingh had entered into a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company, he went away to Delhi and hobnobbed with the samants of the Mughal court. The EIC warned him that if he did not return to his capital he could be removed from the throne. The Maharaja rushed back to Kishangarh. In the meanwhile the samants in connivance with the A.G.G. proclaimed his son, Mokhamsingh, as ruler and laid sieze to the capital. Kalyansingh had to abdicate the throne in favour of Mokhamsingh. He went back to Delhi.

Mokhamsingh died in 1841. In the absence of a heir, his widow adopted Prithvisingh of Kachola who ruled the State till his death in 1879. Prithvisingh was succeeded by his eldest son Shardulsingh. He introduced many reforms in the State. The Somyagya Cotton Mills, a cotton press and several other small scale industries were established during his reign. He founded a new Mandi and named it as 'Madanganj'. In the famine of 1899 the Maharaja opened grain shops and sold food grains at subsidised rates. He also started a few centres for feeding the poor. He died in 1900.

On the death of Shardulsingh, his son Madansingh ascended the throne when he was barely 16 years old. The administration was run by a Council under the supervision of the Resident till 1905 when he was conferred with ruling powers. He established a high school and a hospital. He also built a power house to meet the requirements of the palace and street lights of the capital. He died in 1926 without an issue.

Madansingh's cousin, Yaghya Narain, succeeded him. The latter died in 1939. As both of his sons had died during his life time, his widow adopted Sumersingh of Zorawarpura. Since he was a minor, the administration was carried on by the Political Agent. He was conferred with the ruling powers in June 1947.

The first political organisation known as the Kishangarh Prajamandal was established in 1939 with Jamal Shah as President and Mahmood as Secretary. During the Quit India movement, demonstrations and processions were organised by the Prajamandal but no body was arrested. A little later, the Prajamandal launched satyagraha against the export of moong which led to the arrest of a Prajamandal worker, Krantichand and his son. Both were released from the jail after six months. The Maharaja established an assembly and held elections. The Prajamandal secured majority. In the meanwhile the State was merged in the United State of Rajasthan in March 1948.

The State had an area of 837 sq. miles. Its population in 1941 was 1.04 lakhs. It was bounded on the north and north west by Jodhpur, on the east by Jaipur, on the west and south-east by Ajmer and on the extreme south by Shahpura. The average rainfall was 20 inches. Situated in the heart of Rajasthan, the State was well connected by roads and rail. It has deposits of sandstone and marble. Though a small State, it possessed a textile mill, two steam hydraulic cotton presses, a soap factory and several other small scale industries.

The State was divided into five districts, each under a Hakim who enjoyed limited judicial powers also. The State was administered by a Council of two members. The Council was also the highest court of appeal on the judicial side. The total revenue of the State was Rs. 10 lakhs and expenditure a little more than Rs. 9 lakhs.

## **(9) Jaisalmer**

### **History**

The cruel Diwan, Mehta Salamsingh Tawari (Maheswari) having been out of his way, Maharawal Gajsingh had a sigh of relief. He put the late Diwan's son Bishansingh behind bars on charges of murder of his own step mother. Thus ended the 80 year long supremacy of Tawaris in the administration of the State.

In 1825 some Jagirdars of Jaisalmer started committing dacoities in Bikaner State. They even dared to lift 200 camels from there. The Bikaner State army entered into the Jaisalmer State. The Maharana of Udaipur and the East India Company intervened and effected a compromise between the two States.

In 1843 the EIC launched a campaign against the Mirs of Sindh and brought Sindh under its control. In this campaign the Maharawal made available a large cavalcade of camels for transporting the army and military supplies in the inhospitable region. In lieu of this help, the EIC compelled the Mir of Talpur to return three parganas i.e. Shahgarh, Ghadsia and Ghotaru to Jaisalmer. The Mir had earlier captured these parganas. The Maharawal constructed the Gajroopsagar tank and the Gajvilas palace. He died in July 1846 A.D. Since Gajsingh had no issue, his four year old nephew, Ranjeetsingh, succeeded him. The administration of the State was carried on by Thakur Kesarisingh of Bagdor. The Thakur established law and order in the State and constructed many tanks. The young Maharawal died in 1864 AD.

Ranjeetsingh was succeeded by his younger brother Bairisal. The only event during his 27 year long rule was the famine of 1868 which was one of the worst in Jaisalmer's history. The Maharawal died in 1891 without an heir. He was succeeded by Shyamsingh, the son of the Thakur of Lathi. When Shyamsingh occupied the throne in the name of Shaliwahan at the age of 5, the State was in heavy debt. The child Maharaja was sent for his education to the Mayo College, Ajmer and the administration was carried on by the Prime Minister Mehta Jagjivan with the help of a regency council set up by the British Government under the supervision of the Resident of Jodhpur. Jagjivan ruled the State with iron hands for ten years. Eventually he was attacked by some youngsters and was wounded seriously. A few months later Jagjivan returned to his home province of Gujarat. The Maharawal died in April 1914 at the age of 27 without an heir. On the death of Shaliwahan, Tansingh, the Thakur of Lathi, ascended the throne. The British Government, however, replaced him by Jawaharsingh of Ata, Chief of dacoity operations in the State. The new ruler gave shelter to the notorious Hoors whose leader Pir Pagaro was his friend. In 1944 he had to surrender the Hoors to the Sindh government under pressure from the British Government.

In June 1947 the British Government decided to partition India into two sovereign States of India and Pakistan. The British told the princely States that they were free to join either India or Pakistan. The Maharawal of Jaisalmer toyed with the idea of joining Pakistan under the influence of Maharaja of Jodhpur. The interim Government of India, however, successfully persuaded him to accede to India. Soon thereafter the administration of the State was taken over by the Government of India in view of its strategic importance. The State was later on merged in Rajasthan in March 1949.

### **Administration**

The Maharawal was assisted by a Diwan in the administration of the State. The State was divided into 16 Hukumats, each headed by a Hakim. The Hakim could try petty civil and criminal cases. The other cases were tried by the Sadar Faujdari and Sadar Diwani courts. The Diwan was the highest court of appeal on the civil as well as criminal side.

### **Architecture**

The Havelis belonging to Patwas, Nathmal Mahashewari and Diwan Salimsingh constructed in early 19th century in Jaisalmer are architectural wonders. The stones with which these buildings were built have been carved like paper. Jaisalmer still preserves in its ancient Jain temples some of the oldest Jain works in Pali and Sanskrit written on 'tar-patra'.

### **Political awakening**

In 1896 the Maharawal imposed a tax known as 'Lani' against which the business community launched an agitation. There was a strike in Jaisalmer for a number of days. The Maharawal, however, crushed the agitation. The result was that a large number of businessmen left the State for good. This gave a big setback to whatever trade the State had.

In 1915 some young men tried to establish a reading room at Jaisalmer but their attempt was foiled by the State Government. In November 1930 some social workers published a pamphlet congratulating Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru on his birth day. They were immediately arrested by the State authorities. In 1937-38 some workers tried to establish a political organisation known as Lok Parishad. The State Government arrested some of them and treated others harshly. Most of them left the State.

In May 1941 Sagarmal Gopa, who had migrated to Nagpur in 1931, came to his native place Jaisalmer on account of the death of his father. He had earlier written a booklet named 'Jaisalmer Mein Gunda Raj'. The State Government was determined to punish him. It arrested him on charge of 'sedition'. He, however, remained in jail without trial for about five years. On a complaint made to the Political Agent of Jodhpur by the well known leader, Jai Narain Vyas of the Marwar Lok Parishad, against the imprisonment of Gopa without trial the Political Agent, decided to go to Jaisalmer on April 6, 1946. The jail authorities, however, set Gopa on fire before his arrival. Gopa died the next day. Pt. Jawahar Lal Nehru, who was the President of the All India States People's Conference, severely condemned the murder of Gopa and held the Jaisalmer administration responsible for the dastardly crime. The people of Jaisalmer had a sigh of relief when the Bhati regime ended with the merger of the State in Rajasthan.

### **Economy**

Jaisalmer was the third largest State of Rajasthan with an area of 16062 sq. miles. It was an interminable sea of sand hills of all shapes and sizes, some rising to a height of 150 feet and a part of the Great Indian Desert. Of course within a circumference of forty miles of the capital, the soil was stoney. The sandhills in the west were covered with 'phog' bushes, and those in the east with tufts of long grass. The annual rainfall averaged from 5 to 7 inches. The recurrence of droughts and famines became part and parcel of the State's economy.

The number of villages in the State was 473. The State's population was 1.08 lakhs in 1881, 1.16 lakhs in 1891, 0.71 lakhs in 1901, 0.88 lakhs in 1911, 0.68 lakhs in 1921, 0.76 lakhs in 1931 and 0.93 lakhs in 1941. The sudden decrease of over 36 percent between 1891 and 1901 was due to the great famine of 1899-1900. Similarly the decrease of population of more than 20 percent in the 1911-1921 decade was due to continuous droughts. The density of population was 5 persons per hundred sq. miles. The Hindus constituted 70 percent of the population while the Muslims 25 percent.

The people in the State depended mostly on animal husbandry. A large population living in border areas thrived on cattle-lifting. The cattle, sheep, goats and camels were their wealth. These animals survived to a large extent even in droughts. The camel, called as the ship of the desert, was the chief means of transport and agricultural operations.

Whenever there was rain, bajra, jowar, moong, mot and til were grown. The main exports were wool, ghee, camels, cattle, sheep and hides and the chief imports were food grains, piecegoods and sugar. The nearest railway station was Barmer in Jodhpur State.

In 1908 the total State revenue was Rs. one lakh, the main source being the customs which gave a revenue of about Rs. 48000. The land revenue was just Rs. 16000. In 1938 the total revenue rose to Rs. 3.71 lakhs, out of which, about Rs. 2 lakhs came from customs and Rs. 45000 from land revenue. The State had its own mint since 1756. The local rupee was known as Akheshahi after the name of Maharwal Akheysingh. The mint stopped working since 1899 and the Akheshahi was gradually replaced by the British Indian currency. The capital town of Jaisalmer had an English middle school. Besides, there were two primary schools one at Ramgarh and the other at Bap. The literacy was 3%. There was a small dispensary at Jaisalmer.

### **(10) Karauli**

#### **History**

As stated in the earlier Chapter, Maharaja Manak Pal entered into a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company in November 1817. Karauli, in fact, was one of the earliest States in Rajputana to do so. Under the treaty the Maharaja was to furnish troops according to his means on the requisition of the EIC, though no tribute was levied. In 1825 the Maharaja sent troops to help Bharatpur against the East India Company. However, later on he apologized to the Company.

On the death of Manak Pal in 1832 without an issue, the EIC put Pratap Pal of Hadoti Thikana on the throne against the wishes of the mother and the widow of the late Maharaja. In protest both of them left the State and stayed in Bharatpur. Pratap Pal died in 1849 without an issue. Again a scion of the Hadoti family, Narsingh Pal, was put on the throne. As he was minor, the EIC appointed an executive officer to run the administration. Narsingh Pal died in 1852 even before he became major. The EIC decided to apply the 'doctrine of lapses' initiated by the Governor General, Lord Dalhousie, but the British Government in London turned down the decision of the Governor General and installed Madan Pal as ruler of Karauli.



In the Mutiny of 1857, Madan Pal sided with EIC. He sent his troops to Kota and rescued the Maharaja of Kota from the hands of muntineers. For these services, the British government not only conferred the title of GCSI on Madan Pal, but also wrote off a debt of Rs. 1.2 lakhs. The hereditary salute of the ruler was also increased from 15 to 17 guns. Madan Pal died in 1869 and was succeeded by his nephew, Laxman Pal, who too died after about a month. Laxman Pal was succeeded by Jaipalsingh of Hadoti. The later died after six years in 1875 without an issue.

Jaipalsingh was succeeded by Arjunpal of Hadoti. The British Government, however, divested him of his ruling powers on charges of mismanagement and entrusted the administration to an English officer. The Maharaja died in December 1888 without an issue. He was succeeded by his nephew Bhanwar Pal. The new Maharaja was conferred with full ruling powers in 1889. He was an ace-hunter and shot as many as 300 tigers. In course of time, the State accumulated heavy debts. In 1906 the British Government took over the administration of the State and handed back to the Maharaja after 11 years. The Maharaja died in August 1927. As he had no issue his younger brother Bhompal succeeded him. During his regime a social worker, Kunwar Madan singh, launched agitation and undertook hunger strike alongwith his wife. His demands were abolition of begar, freedom to shoot pigs which destroyed the crops of the farmers and introduction of Hindi as the State language. He gave up the hunger strike after his demands were conceded. Madansingh died in 1927 while serving the cholera affected Harijans.

In 1939 Munshi Trilok Chand Mathur established Praja-mandal which demanded installation of responsible government in the State. During the Quit India movement, Kalyan Prasad Gupta was arrested under the defense of India Act and was released after 3 months. In 1946 Chiranji Lal Sharma of the All India Spinners Association returned to his home-town Karauli and became the President of the Prajamandal. In the meanwhile Maharaja Bhompal died and was succeeded by his son Ganeshpal. The State was merged in March 1948 in the United State of Matsya, which itself was integrated with Rajasthan on May 15, 1949. The only place worth mentioning in the State is the temple of Keladevi situated about six miles from Karauli. It was open to all castes and communities even before the advent of the British rule. A fair was held

every year by the State in the Hindu month of Chetra in which people from all parts of Rajasthan participated.

### **Area and population**

The State was bounded on the north by Bharatpur, on the north-west and west by Jaipur, on the south and south-east by Gwalior and on the east by Dholpur. It had an area of 1242 sq. miles. Practically the entire State was hilly. The river Chambal formed the southern boundary separating the State from Gwalior. The Banas and the Morel also passed through the State. The tigers, leopards, bears, sambhars and deers were found in the State in fairly good number. The rainfall was about 29 inches a year.

The population of the State was 1.56 lakhs in 1981, 1.57 lakhs in 1901, 1.46 lakhs in 1911, 1.34 lakhs in 1921, 1.41 lakhs in 1931, and 1.52 lakhs in 1941. It is interesting to note that the population of the State in 1941 was less even than the population of 1891. It seems that there was lot of migration from the State from time to time because of lack of means of livelihood. Nearly 95 percent of the State's population was Hindu and the rest were Muslims. The Meenas constituted 20 percent of the population, while Chamars and Brahmins 16 percent each. The Gujars, formerly notorious cattle lifters, constituted 10 percent.

### **Economy**

About one-fifth area of the State was cultivable. The principal crops were bajra, gram, mooh, wheat, cotton and paupy. About 23 percent of the area cultivated was irrigated by wells. There were about 3000 wells in the State as early as 1905. There were about 375 tanks. Because of the hilly tracks, irrigation from the tanks was done by 'dhenkulis'. The State was free from famine. Even in the wide-spread famine of 1899-1900 distress in the State was confined to a small area.

The red sand-stone was in abundance throughout the State. There were no industry worth the name. The trade was mainly with the neighbouring States of Jaipur, Gwalior and the U.P. There was no railway in the State. The main exports were cotton, opium, cereals. The imports included piece goods, sugar, gur and salt.

The Maharaja was assisted by a Council of Ministers for the administration of the State. The State was divided into five tehsils, each under a tehsildar who enjoyed petty civil and criminal powers. The Council was also the highest court of appeal in judicial matters.

The annual State revenue was Rs. 6.5 lakhs in 1932. The main sources of income were land-revenue (Rs. 4. lakhs) and customs (Rs. One lac). The total expenditure in the year was practically the same, the main items of expenditure being army (Rs. 110000), royal family (Rs. 55,000), P.W.D. (Rs. 58,000), health (Rs. 17,000), and education (Rs.11000). The total road milage in the State was 40 pucca and 40 kuccha. The first English school was set up in 1864 which was made a high school in 1904. There were several upper primary schools. There were two hospitals and four dispensaries in the state.

### **(11) Jaipur State**

#### **History**

The signing of the treaty by the Jaipur State with the East India Company/ (EIC) brought peace to the State which was ravaged and bled by the Marahatas and Pindaries for about a century. It, however, gave rise to new problems which turned the State into a hot bed of intrigues and financial bankruptcy.

Maharaja Jagatsingh died in November 1818<sup>1</sup> without an heir. A section of the samants and officials put one Mohansingh on the throne ignoring the claims of members of the Kachhava families of Jhilay, Isarda and Barwara considered nearer to the house of Jaipur. In the meanwhile Rani Bhatiyani, one of the widows of the late Maharaja, gave birth to a posthumous son<sup>2</sup>. This gave an opportunity to the EIC to intervene in the internal affairs of the State. The Political Agent for Rajputana, Sir David Ochterlony, installed the newly born child on the throne in the name of Jaisingh III in place of Mohansingh. He set up a Council of Regency under the queen mother Bhatiyani with Rawal Bairisal of Samod as Prime Minister. The Rawal had more enemies than friends. He tried to restore the crown lands usurped by various samants to the State. His efforts were, however, frustrated by the samants with the connivance of Jhuta Ram and Roopa Badharan, both confidants of the queen mother. Court-intrigues made it almost impossible for Bairisal to function.

Ochterlony again intervened in the affairs of the State in January 1823. He exiled Jhuta Ram to Bundelkhand to strengthen the hands of Bairisal. The latter, however, failed to bring order in the administration

1. Jadunath Sarkar, *A History of Jaipur*, Note 3 p. 336.

2. Jadunath Sarkar, *Ibid*, p. 333.

due to non-cooperation of the Jhuta Ram- clique. The State revenue fell to Rs.30 lakhs per annum which was hardly sufficient to meet the day to day expenditure of the State. Non-payment of salary to the hired soldiers created dissatisfaction in their ranks. More importantly, the State failed to pay the annual 'khiraj' to the EIC as per the 1818 treaty. In desperation the Governor General permitted the queen- mother to recall and appoint Jhuta Ram as Prime Minister. Jhuta Ram made things worse. He extorted money from the samants to balance the budget. The samants rose in revolt and brought the State on the brink of a civil war which was averted only with the threat of armed intervention by the British.

Rani Bhatiyani died in 1834. Jaisingh III followed her a year later. Rumours spread that Jhuta Ram had got the young ruler poisoned. Since Jhuta Ram had host of enemies amongst the samants and the British officials, it was quite possible that they gave currency to the rumour. Be that as it may, the rumour served the purpose. Jhuta Ram was made to resign as Prime Minister. The British got an opportunity to establish direct control over the State. Jaisingh III was succeeded by his 16 month old son Ramsingh II. Major Alves, the new Political Agent, took over as 'guardian' of the child-prince. He immediately confined Jhuta Ram in Dausa fort. There was, however, resentment in the public of Jaipur against the British for their active interference in the affairs of the State.

On June 4, 1835, when Major Alves and his party went to meet the mother of the prince, a large number of people gathered at the palace. As the Major came out of the palace after meeting her, some one from the crowd attacked him with a sword and wounded him seriously. Mr.Blake, an assistant of Major Alves, snatched the sword from the man and saved the lives of Alves and his companions. When people saw Blake with a blood stained sword in his hand, they thought that he had murdered the child prince to annex Jaipur to the East India company. As Blake left the palace on an elephant, some Meenas followed him. Finding it difficult to save himself from the mob's fury, Blake got down from the elephant and tried to take shelter in a temple along with his attendant. Both of them were cut to pieces by the mob. The Political Agent took full revenge. After a so called judicial enquiry, Diwan Amarchand and Hidayetullah were hanged. Jhuta Ram and his brother, Hukumchand, were also sentenced to death but their sentences were commuted to life imprisonment. Both died in jail. Several others were also sentenced to

imprisonment of varied terms. The revolt was thus crushed. Bairisal was appointed as Regent. After his death in 1838 the administration was carried on under the direct supervision of the Political Agent.

Thanks to the turmoil following the accession of the infant prince Ram Singh, the State exchequer was in a bad shape. As against an annual revenue of Rs. 23 lakhs the expenditure was Rs.32 lakhs. The khiraj (tribute) payable to the EIC fell in arrears to the tune of Rs. 39 lakhs. On the recommendations of the AGG, Lt. Col. Sutherland, the EIC wrote off the arrears and reduced the annual tribute from Rs. 8 lakhs to Rs. 4 lakhs. The EIC also agreed to forgo the expenditure incurred on the Shekhawati Brigade. The financial equilibrium of the State was thus restored.

On becoming major in 1851 Ramsingh was invested with full ruling powers by the Governor General. For the next three years, however, Rawal Shivsingh, son of the late Bairisal, remained in control of the administration. He involved the State in heavy debts by his extravagance and indolence. In 1854 Ramsingh replaced Shivsingh by Lachmansingh of Chomu. To exercise check over the latter's authority, he appointed Pandit Sheodin as Revenue Minister and Faiz Ali Khan as 'Baxi' in charge of the State armed forces.

During the 'sepoy mutiny' of 1857 the Maharaja placed his troops at the disposal of the EIC. The troops controlled the road from Agra to Delhi. The Maharaja also extended support to the EIC's forces in defeating the Marahata leader Tantiya Tope at Dausa. In recognition of these services, the EIC granted the Maharaja the pargana of Kotkasim in perpetuity. The end of the mutiny was followed by introduction of direct rule of the British Government in India in November 1858. Queen Victoria assumed the title of the 'Empress of India'.

The rule of Ramsingh, who died in September 1880 at an early age of 47, brought peace and prosperity to the State. The State revenue, which was Rs. 29 lakhs in 1850, went upto Rs. 60 lakh in 1880. He appointed British engineers who constructed roads and irrigation works in the State. He introduced modern education in the State and established an allopathic hospital in the capital. He reorganised the administration on modern lines.

Ramsingh was succeeded by Kayamsingh of Isarda in September 1880 in the name of S.Madhosingh II. The new Maharaja did not lag behind in the development of the State. He linked Jaipur and Sawaimadhopur (73 miles), Jaipur and Palsana via Reengus (61 miles) and Reengus and Jhunjhunu (57 miles) with rail. He also purchased the

Sawaimadhopur-Hindaun railway from the B.B. & C.I.R. He constructed a number of roads and irrigation works in the State. He established a cotton press and a ginning factory at Jaipur and another cotton press at Manda. He raised the Maharaja college to B.A. standard in 1888 and M.A. in 1900. Five years later he introduced B.Sc in the college.

One of the 'notable' events of S.Madhosingh's rule was the expansion of the Zanani Deodhi which had a record number of 300 women of various categories such as Paswans, Pardayats, Bais etc., apart from Maharanis. Each inmate of the Deodhi was granted jagir according to her status. The total jagirs enjoyed by the women of the Zanani Deodhi including the Ranis were worth about one third of the State's land revenue. One of the Pardyats, Rooprai, commanded great influence over the Maharaja and in the administration.

It is interesting to note that in spite of the huge amount spent on development and his extra-curricular activities, the Maharaja left behind a cash balance of about Rs. 2 crore. He died in 1922 without an heir. He had adopted Mormukutsingh, a scion of Isarda family, in his life time. It was well known that the Maharaja had to bribe Sir Charles Cleveland and other British officers to the extent of Rs. 50 lakhs, a big fortune during those days, for securing the approval of the British Government for his adoption<sup>1</sup>.

Mormukutsingh succeeded the throne under the name of Sawai Mansingh II at the age of 11. During the minority of the prince, the administration was carried on by a Regency Council. He was invested with full ruling powers in 1931 after he became major. His rule lasted till April 7, 1949 when the State was merged with Rajasthan.

The State made fairly good progress in various fields during the reign of S.Mansingh from 1922 to 1949. The Maharaja was ably assisted in his task by some distinguished Prime Ministers like Sir Mirza Ismile and Sir V.T. Krishnmachari. The Kachhava State had been observing Friday as a weekly holiday since its association with the Mughals about 350 years back. In December 1926 it was changed to Sunday.

### **Agarian Movement**

A large part of Jaipur State, three fifth to be precise, was held in jagir by Thikanedars, Bhomiyas and Maufidars. Some of the Thikanas like Sikar, Khetri and Uniyara were bigger even than the States like Shahpura, Kishangarh and Doongarpur. The Thikanedar of these jagirs

1. Gulab Chand Dhadda's diary, Rajasthan Patrika Oct. 21, 1991.

enjoyed full judicial, revenue and administrative powers. They made attempts to become independent of Jaipur State from time to time but failed in their objective as the British Government declined to support their cause.

The Thikanedars realised land revenue from the peasants in an arbitrary manner, imposed a number of lag bags and took begar. This gave rise to dissatisfaction in the peasantry. The first shot was fired in Sikar in 1922 when the Jats launched an agitation against the tyranny of the Thikana administration. The agitation continued till 1935 when a settlement was reached between the Thikana and the peasants with the intervention of the State Government. A number of lag-bags were abolished. The Jaipur State tenure rules were applied mutatis-mutandis in the Thikana. The 'Jakat' charged on the movement of goods within the Thikana was discontinued and begar was abolished. Needless to state that during the agitation lasting more than 13 years, a number of peasants were jailed and their women folk suffered indignities at the hands of the Thikana people.

Inspired by the movement in Sikar the peasants of the adjoining Shekhawati area also started agitation against the various Jagirdars in 1925. The movement ended in 1936 through the good offices of the State Government. The lag bags and the jakat were abolished and the buffalo-tax reduced. As regards land revenue, it was decided that the Jagirdars concerned and the tenants should settle it mutually, failing which the matter should be referred to the State Government whose decision would be final. Several people lost their lives and hundreds suffered imprisonment during the eleven year long agitation in the region.

### **Social reforms**

The practice of Sati had been ingrained in the Hindu society for centuries. It was Governor General, Lord William Bentinck, who abolished the practice in British India in 1829 and advised the Indian States to take similar step. Jaipur was one of the first States in India which condemned the committing of Sati and made it an offence in 1846 by means of a notification having force of law<sup>1</sup>. In spite of this, the Sati had been committed from time to time in the State. There is however, no record to confirm that any body was prosecuted for abatement to the committing of Sati.

The domestic slavery was prevalent not only in the ruling family but also in the house-holds of jagirdars and sahu-kars. Stringent rules were

1. See copy of the Hindi notification at p. 2019-20 Pt. II of Veer Vinod.

framed against the practice and the very name of 'slave' was proscribed<sup>1</sup>. Another important reform introduced in the State during those days was regulating dowry and the demand by Charans and Bhats for 'tyag' on the occasion of marriages of Rajput girls. The amount of dowry and 'tyag', which the Rajput parents had to pay, was so exorbitant that more often than not they killed the female child soon after her birth.

### **Political Awakening**

The State had been free from external troubles since 1818 when it had signed the treaty with the East India Company. After the mutiny of 1857 it also enjoyed internal peace. Suddenly in 1913 Jaipur's name appeared on the revolutionary map of India. Arjunlal Sethi, a young graduate from Jaipur, came in close contact with the famous revolutionaries of the time like Rasbihari Bose, Sanchindra Sanyal and Master Ameerchand. These revolutionaries had planned to launch an armed struggle against the British Government. They entrusted the responsibility of launching the struggle in Rajasthan to Kesarisingh Barath of Kotah, Thakur Gopalsingh of Kharwa, Seth Damodar Das Rathi of Beawar and Arjunlal Sethi. Sethi's duty was to provide theoretical training to young revolutionaries at his institution known as Vardhman Vidyalaya.

The young men receiving training at the Vidyalaya needed money for their revolutionary activities. They organised a raid at the residence of Mahant of Nimaz in Ara district of Bihar. The Mahant was killed but the young revolutionaries failed to lay hand on the "wealth" of the Mahant. The police succeeded in tracing out the accused. Two of Sethi's pupils viz. Vishnudutt and Moti Chand were prosecuted. Moti Chand was sentenced to death and was hanged. The police wanted to involve Arjunlal Sethi in the conspiracy but could not prosecute him for want of evidence. He was, however, interned in Jaipur and later on sent to Vellor jail in Madras. He was released from the jail in 1920 after seven years. On his way back to Jaipur he was accorded a rousing reception at Pune by hundreds of young men led by Bal Gangadhar Tilak, a top leader of the Congress. After some time Sethi left Jaipur for good and made Ajmer his headquarters where he played an active role in the freedom struggle. He also strived hard for communal amity in Ajmer.

In 1927 Heera Lal Shastri resigned his coveted job in the State Government and founded 'Jeewan Kutir' at Vanasthali. He made the place a centre of women's education. In 1936-37 some public spirited

1. Jadunath Sarkar, *Ibid.* p. 349.



workers established Prajamandal with Chiranjilal Mishra as President and Shastri as General Secretary. The Prajamandal held its first session at Jaipur in 1938. It was presided over by Seth Jamn Lal Bajaj, a close associate of Mahatma Gandhi and originally a resident of Sikar. Shortly thereafter the State faced drought. Bajaj wanted to come to Jaipur from Wardha for organising relief in the famine stricken areas. His entry in the State was banned. He violated the orders and was arrested. The Prajamandal launched a movement in defence of civil rights. About 600 workers including some women were arrested. Ultimately a settlement was reached between the State and the Prajamandal. Bajaj and other workers were released. The Prajamandal was registered and the civil liberties in the State were restored.

In the Quit India movement launched by the Indian National Congress under the leadership of Mahatma Gandhi in 1942, the Jaipur Prajamandal decided not to participate in the movement as it had reached some understanding with the State's Prime Minister Sir Mirza Ismail. A section of the Prajamandal led by Baba Harishchandra felt that it was a national struggle and as such the people of Jaipur could not remain aloof from it. He founded the Azad Morcha and participated in the movement. A number of workers courted arrest. They were released after a few months.

In 1946 Devi Shanker Tiwari, a nominee of the Praja Mandal, was included in the State Cabinet. A few months later, another nominee of the Prajamandal, Mr. Daulat Mal Bhandari, joined the State Cabinet. In March 1947 a new Cabinet headed by Heera Lal Shastri was formed. The Cabinet consisted of four nominees of the Prajamandal and two of the Jagirdars. A Diwan was appointed over its head. He was given the power to veto any decision of the Cabinet. In April 1949 Jaipur was merged in Rajasthan. Thus came to an end the rule of a thousand year old dynasty of Kachhawas over Dhundhar.

### **The Pink City**

While earlier Sawai Jaisingh had the distinction of founding the first planned city in north India, Ramsingh II further added to its beauty. The latter laid out the Ramniwas Garden parallel to the city wall. The garden was a fine specimen of the park architecture and served as a lung to the walled city.

Ramsingh built the famous Albert Hall, an architectural wonder of the 19th century. He constructed the Ram Prakash theatre for the entertainment of the people. He replaced the kerosen lamps with gas

lamps on the streets and provided piped water supply to the city. Above all, he got the buildings of the city coloured in pink and made it famous as the Pink City throughout the world. But for Ramsingh Jaipur would not have been, what it is today.

### **Education**

Jaipur had been the centre of oriental education for long. It was even called the second 'Kashi' of India. The Maharaja Sanskrit college was founded in 1859 where eminent scholars flourished. The State encouraged Urdu and Persian along with Sanskrit. Scholars of Urdu and Persian uprooted from Delhi during the mutiny of 1857 migrated to Jaipur and enriched the cultural life of the city. In 1867 Sawai Ramsingh founded the Maharaja School of Art where subjects like ornamental carpentry, carving in wood, bone, ivory and pottery were introduced.

Jaipur was one of the first princely States in Rajasthan to introduce modern education. Maharaja College was established at Jaipur in 1844. It sent up its first batch for matriculation examination of the Calcutta University in 1867. The college was raised to the intermediate standard in 1873, B.A. in 1888 and M.A. in 1900. The B.Sc. course was introduced in 1905. The State's first women's institution named as Maharani's College was established in 1943 and a medical college in 1947. The State had the distinction of founding the first University in Rajasthan, known as the University of Rajputana, in 1946 in collaboration with other princely States of Rajasthan.

### **Secular traditions**

Except a brief period from 1750 to 1767, when Jains were persecuted, their temples destroyed and the Jain scholar, Todarmal trampled under the feet of an elephant, the State had enjoyed secular traditions right from the Mughal period. Though the Kachhawa rulers were Hindus, the other religions also flourished in the State. The State could boast of having not only numerous Hindu and Jain temples but also a sizable number of mosques and churches. The rulers had made handsome contribution towards construction of Catholic and Protestant churches and mosques in the State<sup>1</sup>. The State enjoyed communal harmony even during the partition days in 1947.

### **Area and population**

The area of Jaipur State was about 15000 sq. miles. A major part of the State was fairly level and open, although its surface was crossed and diversified by hills and isolated peaks. A portion of the Aravali range

1. J. Sarkar, *Ibid* p. 375.

ran from Sambhar to Khetri. It formed a natural divide between the sandy tract of Shekhawati in the north and the fertile plains in the south and south east. The main river in the State was Banas which flew about 110 miles in the southern part of the State. Its tributaries included the Masi and the Morel. The river Chambal merely touched the south-eastern boundary of the State. The average rainfall in the State was about 23 inches. The rainfall in the Shekhawati area was, however, limited to 15 inches only. The climate in the State was dry and healthy.

In the first census held in 1881, the population of the State was 25.27 lakhs. It rose to 28.23 lakhs in 1891. It came down to 26.27 lakhs in 1901. The sudden fall in the population was due to the great famine of 1899-1900. In the census held in 1941, the population was 30.40 lakhs the highest amongst the Rajasthan States. The composition of the population was Brahmins 13%, Jats 10%, Meenas 9%, Scheduled castes 8%, Vaishyas 8%, Gujars 7% and Rajputs 4%.

### **Administration**

The administration of Jaipur State was feudal in character. Initially all the powers were concentrated in the hands of Pradhan. In 1851 AD. S.Ramsingh appointed a Diwan in charge of revenue department and a Bakshi as controller of the army. Ramsingh thus broke the monopoly of power in one hand. In 1854-55 four new departments, namely Police, Medical, Education and Survey and Settlement were created and each of them was placed under a head of department. The State was divided into five districts, each with its own magistrate, civil judge and police chief.

In August 1867 a Council, composed of eight members with Maharaja as President, was formed. Each department was placed in the joint charge of two ministers. The same year the number of districts were increased from five to ten. In 1921 Maharaja Madhosingh II replaced the Council by 'Mahakma Khash' consisting of six ministers. Unlike the earlier council system, each minister was given charge of a department. This arrangement continued till 1931 when Maharaja Mansingh II was invested with ruling powers.

Mansingh formed a 'Council of State' consisting of himself as President, the Prime Minister as Vice President and a certain number of ministers. The Army Department was in the hands of Maharaja himself

while the Political Department with the Prime Minister. The other Departments were allocated to the Ministers.<sup>1</sup>

The various laws were framed on the lines of British India. The Chief Court was the highest judicial court. Below it were the district judge's courts, subordinate judge's courts and the munsifs courts on the civil side and the courts of sessions judge, assistant sessions judge and magistrates on the criminal side. Appeals from the Chief Court in important cases could be heard by the Council of State. The police force was headed by an Inspector General, with two DIG's and eight SPs under him.

In 1938 the Village Panchayat Act was promulgated. The same year the Jaipur Municipal Act was passed in which half the seats were to be filled by election. Similar was the case with the district municipalities<sup>2</sup>.

### **Economy**

The economy of the State was mainly based on agriculture. The entire Shekhawati area and several other parts of the State, which had scanty rainfall, produced only one crop. The State Government had constructed a number of irrigation works like Jamuwa Ramgarh, Todisagar, Chaparwada, Moral, Buchara, Kalikho etc. which provided irrigation in some tracts. The southern parts of the State had reasonably good rainfall. These areas produced two harvests. viz. Rabi and Kharif. The main crops in these parts of the State were wheat and barley in the Rabi and bajra, moong and cotton in the Kharif.

The prices of agricultural products got a philip during the second world war and thereafter. Agriculture thus became economical to some extent. According to the State Administrative Report for 1946-47 the high prices of agricultural commodities "enabled peasants to shake off their indebtedness to a considerable extent". The prices of the commodities during the year were wheat  $2\frac{1}{2}$  seers, barley  $4\frac{1}{2}$  seers, gram 5 seers, maize 5 seers, jowar 4 seers, rice one seer, ghee 3 chhantakas and oil 9 chhantakas per rupee.

Apart from the salt, which was manufactured at Smabhar lake, the other minerals produced were mica and soapstone which were worked

1. Sarkar. Ibid. p. 381

2. Sarkar. Ibid p. 391-392.

by private entrepreneurs on monopoly basis. The historical copper mines at Khetari, which were worked even during the Indus Valley Civilisation and later had fallen to disuse for last several centuries. The iron mines at Kalivad had not been worked for decades.

Jaipur had been famous for its cottage industries long before the dawn of the British rule in India. The disintegration of the Mughal empire compelled the artisans engaged in various types of works at Delhi and Agra to migrate to Jaipur and other places. These artisans gave a boost to handicraft trade in the State. Jaipur and Khandela were centres of production of gota and kinari, kaccha (imitation) as well as pucca (real). Excellent embroidery work was done at Jaipur on fine silk and superfine cotton cloth. The enamel work made Jaipur famous throughout the world. Its consumption was limited to the princes, nobles and the rich. It, however, found good market in Europe. The ivory carving work was also done by some families in Jaipur.

For long the Jaipur city had enjoyed a high reputation in the international market in lapidary industry. Precious stones such as emerald, diamond, ruby, sapphire and garnet were cut in small pieces and shaped for fitting in the jewellery and the ornaments. The industry was in the hands of traditional jeweller families. Hundreds of artisans, mostly Muslims, were dependent on them.

A class of artisans was engaged in marble carving in Jaipur city. They produced not only statues of gods, men and women but also ornamented pillars, fountains, domes, arches and canopies. The blue and white pottery was introduced first in 1866 by the local school of art. Artistic pottery wares were exported even in foreign countries. The industry, however, dwindled in 1930s.

The carpet manufacturing based on woollen fabrics was an important small scale industry in the State. In Jaipur city alone six units, employing 1500 workers, produced high class carpets as late as 1945. A number of towns including Jaipur, Sanganer, Bagru, Shahpura, Hindon, and Khilchipur were known for calico printing. The products were popular throughout the country.

During the freedom movement, the Khadi (hand woven and hand spun cloth) and handicrafts received a big philip in the country. The all India Charkha Sangh established by Mahatma Gandhi spread the message

of Khadi in the twenties. Under inspiration of Seth Jammalal Bajaja, the well known constructive workers Deshpandey and Madanlal Khaitan established "Rajasthan Charkha Sangh" in 1926. Centres for production of Khadi were established at Amarsar, Dausa, Manoharpura, Govindgarh etc. It provided work to hundreds of men and women. Hand made paper industry flourished in Sanganer and Sawai Mahdopur. It received a big boost during the second world war. The modern industry came to the State in a small way. A cotton press was established at Jaipur in 1882 and a ginning factory in 1912. Both the units were in the public sector.

The Jaipur State did rather well in cottage and small industry sector during the British rule. This was, however, not the case with medium and large scale industries. It was not because the people of the State lacked entrepreneurship but because the rulers were indifferent to industrialisation. This will be corroborated by the fact that the Marwari families from Shekhawati left the land of their birth and set up industries in a big way in other parts of the country.

The second world war gave an impetus to industrial development in the country. The princely States of Rajasthan realised that no State could prosper in the modern age without industrialisation. In November 1943 the Sate Government permitted Poddars of Nawalgarh to put up a textile factory at Jaipur. It granted a number of concessions to Poddars on this account. It also participated in equity to the extent of 10 per cent. It allowed them to enjoy monopoly in the field for a period of ten years. The factory was known as "Jaipur Spinning and Weaving Mills Ltd." It came into production in 1946. It had about 6000 spindles and employed about 800 workers.

Kamanis established the Jaipur Metal Industries in 1945 with a capital investment of Rs. 50 lakhs. It had a refinery, a rolling mill and a drawing plant. During the second world war, the factory was one of the biggest suppliers of non-ferrous alloys to the railways and defence establishments. A few years later, permission was granted to Dalnias (Sahu-Jain) to establish a cement factory at Sawai Madhopur with a production capacity of 165000 tons per annum, to Birlas a ball bearing factory at Jaipur in collaboration with M/s Hoffman Co.Ltd. U.K. with an annual rated capacity of 6 lakhs ball-bearings and to Roongtas an iron and steel factory known as Man Industrial Corporation. These factories commenced production after the formation of Rajasthan.

## (12) Alwar State

### History

Bakhtawarsingh died without a legitimate son. He had however, a male child named Balwantsingh from his concubine Moosi. Some Jagirdars wanted to put Bakhtawarsingh's cousin Bannarsingh on the throne, while others favoured Balwantsingh. The East India Company recognised them jointly as rulers with the stipulation that while Bannarsingh would have the title of 'Raja', Balwantsingh would exercise the powers. As both were minors the administration of the State was carried on till 1824 by a Regency Council consisting of Nawab Ahmed Bax Khan, Thakur Akshya Singh and Ramu Khawash.

When the two rulers became major they started asserting their authority, each in his own way. The court was divided into two groups. One group led by Ahmed Bax supported Balwantsingh while the other Bannarsingh. A number of followers of Bannarsingh were arrested on charge of attempt to murder Ahmad Bax. The Bannarsingh group soon took revenge. It killed a number of followers of Balwantsingh and put Balwantsingh behind bars. The EIC intervened and sent an army detachment against Bannarsingh. A compromise was reached according to which Balwantsingh was granted the jagir of Tizara worth Rs. 2 lakhs as also a cash amount of Rs. 2 lakhs per annum. Balwantsingh spent rest of his life at Tizara where he died in 1845 without an issue. Tizara was restored to Alwar.

Bannarsingh appointed Ammu Jan as his Diwan. For sometime Ammu Jan administered the State well but later on he became corrupt. He appointed his two brothers on important positions in the State. Bannarsingh got Ammu Jan and his two brothers arrested. He released them only when they paid Rs. 7 lakhs as fine. He died in 1857 after a long rule of 42 years.

Bannarsingh was succeeded by his 13 year old son Shivdansingh. Ammu Jan again became powerful during the minority of the ruler. He recruited a number of his relatives on various important posts in the State. He even planned to marry one of the girls of his family to the young ruler and convert him to Islam. This led to a revolt by the Rajputs. While Ammu Jan fled from the State, some of his relatives were caught and killed. The Political Agent of Bharatpur, Cap. Nixon, came to Alwar and appointed a Panchayat of local Sardars to run the administration. A little later a new Agency was established in Alwar and Cap. Impi was appointed as the first Political Agent.

In 1863 Shivdarsingh was conferred with full ruling powers. He recalled Anmu Jan and ran the administration with his advice. He dismissed several officials appointed by Impi. The Muslims again dominated the State. The Maharao was highly extravagant. The State treasury became empty. The State incurred heavy debts. The Maharao confiscated a number of jagirs and maufis. He dismissed the Rajputs from the army and replaced them by Muslims. This led to serious dissatisfaction amongst the Jagirdars. The Political Agent made efforts to persuade the Maharao to reinstate the Rajputs in the army but failed.

The British Government set up a Council with the Political Agent as head to run the administration. The Maharao opposed British interference. But the British Government made it clear that the alternative was to remove him from the throne. The Maharao was thus effectively silenced. His position was reduced to status of an ordinary member of the Council. His privy purse was fixed at Rs. 3000 per month. The jagirs and maufis confiscated by him were returned to their holders and the Rajputs dismissed from the army reinstated. In short, the Council reversed all that the Maharao had earlier done. The British Government granted a loan of Rs. 10 lakhs to pay off the creditors from whom the Maharao had taken loans. The land revenue was increased by  $7\frac{1}{2}$  percent to augment the State's income. The Maharao became mentally unsound in his last years and died in 1874 at the age of 29 without an heir.

The British Government appointed Mangalsingh of Thana as successor to Shivdarsingh in consultation with sardars. Since Mangalsingh was a minor, the State was run by the Political Agent assisted by a Regency Council. Thakur Lakhdeersingh of Bijwad, a rival claimant to the throne and his Rajput followers did not offer 'nazars' to the new Maharao as a protest. Their jagirs were confiscated. Lakhdeersingh himself was exiled from the State. On his death in September 1875, his jagir was restored to his successor Madhosingh.

The young Maharao was admitted to the Mayo College, Ajmer. He was the first Rajput prince from Rajasthan to be admitted to this institution. The same year Alwar was connected with Delhi by rail. The Maharao was given full ruling powers in 1877. In 1889 the British Government conferred on him the hereditary title of Maharaja. In May 1892 Kunj Bihari Lal, a member of the Council, was murdered allegedly at the instance of the Maharaja. The very next day the Maharaja himself died at Nenital. During the rule of Mangalsingh import, export and transit



duties were abolished on all articles except spirit, opium and other intoxicating drugs. He founded a women's hospital at Alwar.

Mangalsingh was succeeded by his son Jaisingh on May 23, 1892 when he was only ten years old. The prince was sent to the Mayo College, where he distinguished himself as a student and received a gold medal for establishing an all time record in the diploma examination. During his minority, the Regency Council set up by the British Government carried on the administration till 1903 when the Maharaja was conferred with full ruling powers.

The young Maharaja carried out a number of reforms soon after he took over. He established the Secretariat and constituted a Council of Ministers on modern lines. He separated judiciary from the executive and established village panchayats through out the State and vested them with civil and criminal powers. He replaced Urdu by Hindi as official language. He named roads, parks, public buildings and palaces in chaste Hindi. He also gave the Chamber of Princes the Hindi name of 'Narendra Mandal' of which he was a co-founder. He had represented the rulers of Indian States at the Round Table Conference convened by the British Government in Nov. 1930 to discuss proposals for political reforms in India.

Jaisingh constructed a number of roads and irrigation works like Jaisamand, Vijayasagar and Mansarovar. For this, the Viceroy Lord Chelmsford praised the Maharaja for relieving the people of the State from the spectre of famine once for all. The Maharaja also built luxurious palaces at Alwar, Sariska and Abu. He was a great environmentalist. He took afforestation measures on large scale and made a number of villages green. He took several steps to preserve wild life in the State.

The Maharaja established a post-graduate college at Alwar and opened a number of primary and secondary schools in the rural areas. He upgraded the hospital in the capital and opened dispensaries in the districts. Jaisingh introduced several social reforms. He banned child and unequal marriages and death feasts.

The Maharaja spent a lot of money on public works, education and health and on himself too. The State treasury became empty. In 1924 he raised the rates of land revenue to meet the growing deficit in the State budget. The biswedars and farmers started agitation which culminated in the killing of hundreds of men, women and children in

police firing at Neemuchana on May 24, 1924. The high handed action of the Maharaja was condemned through out the country. Mahatma Gandhi called the Neemuchana massacre as "Dairism double distilled". The high prestige enjoyed by the Maharaja in the public in the State and outside received a set-back.

The Muslims had been a pampered community in the State since the days of Maharao Bannarsingh. Jaisingh was also considerate to them. He had Raja Gazanfar Alikhan as his minister and General Abdul Rahman Khan as commander-in-chief. There was a good number of Muslims employed in various branches of administration. Besides, Muslims poets and musicians had adorned his court.

The Meos inhabiting in Mewat were comparatively prosperous farmers. In spite of all this the Meos continued to nurse one or the other grievance against the State Government. In May 1932 nearly 40000 Meos collected at Bahadurpur on the occasion of Moharum and decided to start an agitation in various parts of the State. The agitation took communal turn. At least four districts were affected by riots. In January 1933 in a worst communal riot at Tizara, a number of Hindus were killed and several temples destroyed. In Govindgarh, the army fired on the mob killing several Meos. The British Government got an opportunity to intervene in the affairs of the State. It sent a Gorkha brigade to the State and suppressed the riots. At the same time it served an ultimatum on the Maharaja to hand over the administration to its nominees or leave the State within 48 hours for a period of two years. The Maharaja chose the second option. Although his externment was confined to Rajasthan States and Delhi and Simla, he preferred to spend his period of exile in Europe. He put on khadi clothes and left for Europe on May 22, 1933.

Following the exile of Jaisingh, the British Government appointed F.V. Wylie ICS (later Sir Francis Verner Wylie) as Prime Minister of Alwar. He started undoing what Jaisingh had done. He abolished the panchayats and relaxed rules regarding death and marriage feasts. He recruited persons in government service on communal lines.

Soon Wylie became unpopular and had to leave Alwar within 20 months of his becoming the Prime Minister. Before, however, he left the State he had gathered together all anti-Jaisingh forces in Alwar to make Jaisingh's life miserable, if at all he returned to the State. Jaisingh had externed Thakur Gangasingh of Srichandpura from Alwar State. Wylie brought him back to Alwar and restored his jagir to him. He put his son

Tejsing as Thakur of Thana and thus made him a claimant to the gaddi of Alwar in case Jaisingh died without an heir. Jaisingh had removed Raja Durjansingh of Jaoli as minister. Wylie made him a senior minister.

The relations between Jaisingh and his junior Maharani had become strained soon after their marriage. Wylie made use of her in making her complain to the British Government against her husband. She sought the protection of her honour, in case the Maharaja was allowed to return to the State. Wylie's last act during his stay at Alwar was to destroy a sealed envelop given to him by the Maharaja at the time of his exile from Alwar. The envelop contained his will about succession to the Alwar throne in case of his death without an heir. Wylie thus paved the way for Tejsingh as ruler of Alwar State on the death of Jaisingh so that anti-Jaisingh legend might flourish even after his death.

Wylie, who was a darling of the Political Department of the Government of India, was rewarded for his 'loyal' services to the Alwar State. He was made Resident of Jaipur, a premier State of Rajasthan in January 1935 and later on as Governor of Central Provinces and Berar. He was the first Irish on whom the British Government had conferred this honour.

Maj. W.F. Campbell succeeded Wylie as Prime Minister of Alwar. The A.G.G., George Ogalvi, came to Alwar in May 1935 and announced that Jaisingh's period of exile, which was to expire that very month, had been extended by the Viceroy Lord Willingdon by 15 years. Jaisingh died on May 19, 1937 in Paris, the home of a number of revolutionaries. His body was brought to Alwar where his final rites took place. As manipulated by Wylie, the British Government put Tejsingh, Thakur of Thana, on the throne in July 1937. The people of Alwar held a public meeting to protest against the installation of Tejsingh as ruler of Alwar. The organisers of the meeting, Kunj Bihari Lal Modi and Hari Narain Sharma, were prosecuted on charges of sedition and were imprisoned. The agitation was nipped in the bud.

Jaisingh was much ahead of his times. He introduced radical social and administrative reforms and led the State to progress in the field of irrigation, roads, education and public health. All the same he was over ambitious, extravagant and eccentric too. Edwin Montague, the then Secretary of States for India, in his 'India Diary' has described Jaisingh as the most brilliant Indian he ever met. He was an orator par-excellence and a scholar in Hindi as well as in Sanskrit and English.

The celebrated author, John Gunthar, in his book 'Inside Asia', has correctly described Jaisingh "as one of the most extraordinary human being..... a little bit of a saint and a great deal of sadist, double-natured to an amazing degree, combining extreme purity of motive with most savaged cruelty like a prince of sixteenth century Italy; crazy, cruel, brilliant, arrogant and a bizarre creature of pride and vice".

### **Political movement**

Being close to Delhi the young generation of Alwar was duly affected by the freedom movement in the country. The late Bhawani Sahai Sharma of Alwar had become a leading light of the Hindustan Socialist Republican Army as early as 1931. In 1932 he was arrested under 1818 Regulation and was released in 1939 after seven years of imprisonment.

In 1938 the Alwar Prajamandal was established in accordance with the policy of the Indian National Congress. In the same year the State Government increased tuition fee in the schools. This led to an agitation by the Prajamandal in which several workers including Kunj Bihari Lal Modi, Hari Narain Sharma and Nathu Ram Modi were arrested and sentenced to various terms of imprisonment. Master Bhola Nath, who later on played an important part in the struggle for responsible government in the State, was the product of this movement. During the second world war the Prajamandal started agitation against raising war fund by the State Government. The Prajamandal, however, did not participate in the Quit India Movement presumably under the influence of the Jaipur Prajamandal. Of course a few lawyers gave up practice in sympathy with the national movement.

In 1946 the Prajamandal held a conference at Kheda-Mangalsingh to condemn the oppression of the local Jagirdars. A number of workers including Bhola Nath, Shobharam, Bhawani Sahai Sharma, Kasi Ram Gupta and Shanti Swaroop Data were arrested. In protest the schools and the only college in Alwar were closed. The capital observed strike for about a week. However, an agreement was reached between the ruler and the Prajamandal with the good offices of the Jaipur Prajamandal leader, Heera Lal Shastri. The Maharaja agreed to set up a popular Ministry in the State. The workers were released from jail. Since however, the Maharaja insisted on including a representative of the Hindu Mahasabha as well in the Ministry, the Prajamandal declined the offer. In August some miscreants burnt the national flag at Rajgarh. This led to a popular agitation in which 600 persons were arrested. The Jaipur

leader Heera Lal Shastri again intervened. The arrested persons were released.

The partition of the country in August 1947 was followed by communal riots all over the country. One of the States worst affected by the riots was Alwar. Dr. N.B. Khare was the Prime Minister of the State at this juncture. Though he was a leading Congressman earlier, he became anti-Congress and a staunch Hindu Mahasabite since his dismissal as the Premier of the Central Province (M.P.) in 1938 at the instance of the Congress Parliamentary Board. The Government of India was informed that the State Government was inimical to Muslims and that they were being expelled from the State. There were also allegations that Maharaja Alwar and Dr. N.B. Khare had given shelter to the alleged assassins of Mahatma Gandhi. The Government of India interned Maharaja Alwar as well as Khare in Delhi and took over the administration of the State on February 7, 1948. On March 18, Alwar was merged in the Matsya Union. The new State was established with the integration of Alwar, Bharatpur, Dholpur and Karauli. Sobharam, a Prajamandal leader of Alwar, was made the Premier and the Maharaja of Dholpur as the Rajapramukh of the Union with Alwar as capital.

### **Area and Population**

The area of Alwar State at the time of merger was 3158 sq. miles. It was quadrilateral in shape. The ridges of the rocky hills were a feature throughout the State. The Aravallis ran from south to north. The main rivers which flew in the State were the Sabi and the Ruparel. Both were non-perennial. The fauna, consisting of tigers, sambhars, hyenas, leopard, deer and antilop etc., flourished in the State thanks to Maharaja Jaisingh who was a great environmentalist. The following verse, popular in the Alwar region even today, is a tribute for his love for animals:

**“जयसिंह रा राज में सुखी हिरण और शेर”**

("In Jaisingh's rule, the lion as well as the deer were happy.")

The number of towns and villages in the State was 1762. The population of the State was 7.68 lakhs in 1881, 8.28 lakhs in 1901, 7.92 lakhs in 1911, 7.01 lakhs in 1921, 7.5 lakhs in 1931 and 8.23 lakhs in 1941. It is not clear why there was a steep fall in population by more than 90,000 between 1911 and 1921. Quite possible, it might have been due to migration of farmers because of wide spread destruction of crops by wild animals whose killings was prohibited by the State. The ban was later on lifted following serious agrarian trouble throughout the State.

The most numerous tribe in Alwar was that of Meos which constituted more than 13% of the population. They were settled mostly in the Mewat area. The Chamars were 11%, the Brahmins, 9%, the Ahirs 8%, the Meenas 6% and the Gujars and the Mahajans 5% each.

### **Administrative set up**

The ruler was assisted by a Council consisting of three members to run the administration. For revenue purposes, the State was divided into two districts, each in charge of a deputy collector. Each district was divided into 6 tehsils. The tehsildars enjoyed civil as well as criminal powers. Over them were a faujdar and a civil judge who not only heard appeals against the judgments of the tehsildars but also had original civil and criminal jurisdiction. The district and session judge heard appeals against the decisions of the faujdar and the civil judge and tried cases beyond their powers. The highest court was the Council which was sometime presided over by the ruler himself.

### **Transport and Communications**

The Rajputana-Malwa railway ran through the State from north to south, its length in the State being 56 miles. The same railway ran from west to east for 19 miles. The total length of roads was 251 miles, out of which the metalled roads were 68 miles. There were 28 post offices and one telegraph office run by the British Government.

### **Economy**

The State's 86% of the area was Khalsa (crown lands) and the rest was possessed by Istimarardars, Jagirdars and Maufidars. The Istimararadars paid a prescribed amount to the State annually depending on their holdings. In addition they were also required to pay three percent of the amount for dispensaries, schools, and roads. There were two categories of Jagirdars. One had the obligation of supplying horsemen to the State when needed, while the other had no such obligation. The Jagirdars of either category had to pay a cess called 'adwab'. Maufi lands were granted to Rajputs for maintenance, to Kannongos and Chawkidars as remuneration for their services, to Brahmins and Charans as a measure of charity and to the temples for their upkeep. The holders of maufilands generally paid no cess.

The holders of land in the Khalsa were known as Zamindars who were entitled to occupy the land so long as they cultivated it and paid rent to the State. The land was inheritable and alienable by sale, gift or mortgage subject to the sanction of the competent authority.

The land revenue in the State was levied in kind to the extent of  $\frac{1}{2}$  of the gross produce till 1838 when cash assessment was introduced. The first settlement was undertaken on summary basis in 1859 for a period of three years creating a demand of Rs. 14.7 lakhs. As a result of the settlement of 1899-1900, which was for 20 years, the demand rose to Rs. 22.7 lakhs. The average assessment per acre on wet land varied from Rs. 6 and As 3 and Rs. 7 and As 4, while that of dry land was Rs. 2/12/-. The rates amounted to  $\frac{1}{4}$ th of the total yield or  $\frac{2}{3}$ rd of the net assets.<sup>1</sup>

As early as 1903 about 15 percent of the cultivable land was under irrigation. There were about 175 irrigation tanks and 15000 wells in the Khalsa area alone. The normal cost of a masonry well varied from Rs. 400 to Rs. 1500 according to the depth of the well.

The forest area was 367 sq. miles. The most common trees in the area were salad, bamboos, tendu, bhaw, dhok, jamun, karmala, shemal etc. The hills in the south and south western part of the State possessed minerals such as copper, iron and lead but were never exploited. Marble of different colours viz. pink, black and white was found in various parts of the State.

The only modern industry established in the State were a cotton press established in 1884 and a ginning factory in 1894. Both were private concerns. The royalty charged by the State on the two factories was Rs. 3000 per annum. There was a small indigo factory which exported its products to Calcutta. In addition there were a number of cottage industries which manufactured glass bangles, bottles and thick paper. Some families were also engaged in weaving and dyeing.

The chief exports from the State were cotton, oil seeds, bajra, dyed turbans and shoes. The State imported sugar, salt, wheat, piece-goods and iron and steel.

The foodgrains in the State were quite cheap. Wheat, barley and bajra in 1910 were sold at 12 seers, 18 seers and 17 seers per rupee respectively. The rates went up after the first world war (1914-1918). In 1920 the rates of the above commodities were 7 seers, 9 seers and 8 seers per rupee. The ghee was 14 chhatank per rupee in 1910 and remained so till 1923.

The total income of the State in 1907-08 was about Rs. 32 lakhs. In 1940-41 it rose to Rs. 41 lakhs. The main source of income was land

<sup>1</sup> Imperial Gazetteer of India. Rajputana 1908 p. 436.

revenue which accounted for Rs. 24 lakhs in 1907-08. In late thirties, the customs became another important source of revenue. The income from this source in 1940-41 was Rs. 6 lakhs. The excise, forests and mines, each accounted for less than Rs. 1 lakh in that year.

The main items of expenditure were army, police, education and health which accounted for Rs. 4.77 lakhs, Rs. 2.7 lakhs, Rs. 2.59 lakhs and Rs. 1.92 lakhs respectively according to the budget of 1940-41. The budgets were generally surplus. The State invested their funds in the Government of India securities from time to time bringing a handsome return by way of interest.

### **(13) Bundi**

#### **History**

Hada Vishnusingh of Bundi died in 1821, just three years after his entering into a treaty of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company. He was succeeded by his ten year old son Ramsingh at a time when the State treasury was empty. The State had to borrow Rs. 2 lakhs to celebrate the marriage of the young ruler with the daughter of Maharaja Mansingh of Jodhpur. Mansingh cleared off this debt as part of the dowry.

During the minority of Maharao Ram Singh, the administration of the State was run by a council of four Hada Sardars under the supervision of the Resident. When Ramsingh was conferred with the ruling powers on his attaining majority, the Rathors of Jodhpur, who had come along with Jodhpur princess, spread their tentacles in the administration at the cost of Hadas. They murdered Dhabhai Kishan Ram, the Musahib of Bundi, to clear the way for their supremacy in the Bundi court. It was resented by the Hadas. A skirmish followed between the Rathors and the Hadas in which several people were killed. The intervention of the Resident brought peace between the two warring groups. In the mutiny of 1857 Bundi did not extend help to the EIC initially. The British Government (successor to the EIC) conveyed its displeasure by suspending correspondence with Bundi for a period of three years.

During the long reign of 68 years, Maharao Ramsingh turned Bundi into a centre of Sanskrit learning. There were as many as 40 Sanskrit schools in the State. A number of scholars like the well known Dingal poet and historian Surajmal Mishran, Ashanand, Jeewan Lal and



Hamir Khan adorned his court. The Dadu-panthi saint and author of 'Vichar-sagar', Nishchaldas had flourished during this period. Ramsingh introduced a number of social reforms in the State. He died in 1889 at a ripe age of 78.

Ramsingh was succeeded by his son Raghuvirsingh, who died in 1927 without any issue. His 38 year rule was rather uneventful. He was succeeded by his nephew Iswarisingh. The only important event of his reign was the murder of Rajpurohit Ramnath Kudai, because the latter refused to perform the last rites of a keep of the Maharao. The city of Bundi observed hartal for 9 days as a protest against the heinous crime. The financial condition of the State was so bad that the British Government had to reduce the Khiraj from Rs. 1.20 lakhs to Rs. 70,400 per annum. Iswarisingh died in May 1945. He was succeeded by his adopted son Bahadurshingh. Soon after independence the State was merged in the United State of Rajasthan in March 1948.

### **Political Awakening**

The State, situated as it was on the Mewar border, was influenced by the agrarian movements in Bijolia and Begun. The farmers of Bundi State launched a similar movement under the leadership of Pandit Nayanuram Sharma in 1926 against exorbitant rates of land-revenue, lag-bags (cess) and forced labour. At a meeting held at Dabi, the police resorted to firing in which Nanakji Bhil was killed.

In 1931 a former commander of the State forces, Nityanand Nagar, participated in the Salt-satyagraha at Ajmer. The State Government forfeited his jagir and other property. In 1942 Nityanand and his son Rishidatt Mehta were arrested. Nityanand spent 4 years in Bundi jail, while Rishidatt was sent to Ajmer jail. The latter was released in 1944. The same year the Bundi Rajya Lok Parishad was established with Hari Mohan Mathur as President and Brijsunder Sharma as Secretary.

### **Administration**

The State was governed by the Maharao assisted by a Council consisting of five members. There were 12 administrative units known as Tehsils. There were civil and criminal courts known as Diwani and Faujdari. The civil court decided suits not exceeding Rs. 2000 in value. The criminal court had the powers of imprisonment upto one year. The final appellate authority was the Council itself.

The State had its own silver coinage since the time of Shah Alam II. The coins were known as Gyhar Shahi (rupee of the eleventh year of Akbar II), Ram Shahi and Katan Shahi.

### **Area and Population**

The State was roughly an irregular rhombus traversed by double line of hills which divided the State almost into two equal portions. The area of the State was 2220 sq. miles. The only river was the Mej, a tributary of the Chambal, which formed the boundary between Bundi and Kota. The annual average rainfall was about 20 inches.

The number of villages in the State was 819. The population of the State in 1881 was 2.55 lakhs and in 1891, 2.96 lakhs. It came down to 1.71 lakhs in 1901 due to the great famine of 1899 followed by a severe epidemic. The population rose to 2.9 lakhs in 1911 and came down to 1.87 lakhs in 1921 because of another great epidemic in 1915. It rose to 2.16 lakhs in 1931 and to 2.50 lakhs in 1941. The most numerous caste in the State was that of the Meenas who were the original settlers in the area. They constituted about 13 percent of the total population. They took to loot and dacoities after the Hadas occupied their territories in the 14th century. The Gujars and Brahmins each constituted 10 percent, while Malis, Mahajans and Chamars were each 8 to 9 percent of the total population.

### **Economy**

The people depended mainly on agriculture. The principle crops grown were wheat, barley, gram and opium. The irrigated area was about 70 sq. miles. The main source of irrigation was wells. There were two irrigation tanks at Hindoli and Diguri which irrigated 240 and 60 acres of land respectively. More than 40% of the area was occupied by forests. The trees grown were Kher, Khejada, Babool, Dhok, Mahuwa etc.

The land revenue was earlier collected partly in cash and partly in kind but since 1881 it was paid entirely in cash at the rates fixed by the State from time to time. The rates per acre of wet land ranged from Rs. 2 to Rs. 14 and for dryland from Rs. 2.5 to Rs. 3 in the local currency. The total revenue of the State in 1908 was Rs. 6 lakhs, the main sources being the land revenue (Rs. 3.56 lakhs) and customs (1.8 lakhs). The revenue rose to Rs. 35 lakhs by the time of State's merger in Rajasthan.

The two-thirds of the areas of the State was *Khalasa*. The tenant was not dispossessed till he paid the rent. The *Bhomiya*s held rent free

land in return for miscellaneous services. A class of land-lords, known as Chauth Battas, paid rent to the State at 1/4 of their produce. They were mostly Rajputs.

The Jagirdars were generally Hadas and held their land rent free. They had to perform military and other services both in person and in supplying contingent whenever needed. The jagir lands were liable to be resumed by the ruler for misconduct. The Kherat land or maufi granted to Brahmins or religious and charitable institutions was held rent free but could not be alienated.

The iron ore mines in north western part of the State were at one time extensively worked but later on abandoned. There were big deposits of limestone. In 1913 a cement factory known as the Bundi Portland Cement Limited was established. The factory was later on taken over by the Associated Cement Company. It was one of the largest cement factories in the country employing about 3500 persons and producing more than two lakh tones of cement. Apart from the cement, the State exported oilseeds, cotton, spices, opium, hides etc. The main imports were cloth, sugar, rice, salt etc.

### **Communication**

The total length of metal roads was 60 miles. The only railway which passed through Bundi was the Nagda-Mathura railway. While there was one imperial post office at Bundi, the State had its own postal system throughout the State.

### **Education**

The literacy in the State was 2.5 percent (4.7% amongst males and 0.1% amongst females). There was a high school at Bundi and a vernacular school at Nenwa. The total State expenditure on education was Rs. 3000 per annum. There were, however, about a dozen primary schools managed privately. The State Government also maintained a hospital at the capital.

## **(14) Kota**

### **History**

Maharao Unmedsingh I, who had signed the treaty of subsidiary alliance with the East India Company (EIC), died in 1819. During his 48 year long reign his Diwan and Faujdar, Zalimsingh Jhala, remained the de facto ruler of the State. In fact, by an amendment to the treaty

with the EIC, Jhala had secured for himself and his heirs and successors the right to administer the State as Diwan in perpetuity. He got this unusual amendment inserted in the treaty with the help of the Political Agent, Col. James Tod. He had once written to Tod that the time was ripe for the intervention of the EIC in the States. He had stated that there would be no need for the Britishers to use force, as the Indians would themselves hand over the country to them because of disunity and jealousy against each other. He proved a prophet.

Kishore Singh II succeeded his father Ummedsingh. The new Maharao did not like the supremacy of Zalimsingh in the administration. This led to confrontation between him and Zalimsingh. It was through the good offices of the Maharana of Udaipur that a settlement was arrived at between the two parties. It was agreed that Jhala would not interfere in the private affairs of the Maharao while the latter would allow Zalimsingh to run the affairs of the State unhindered in accordance with the provisions of the treaty of 1818.

Zalimsingh died in 1824. His son Madhosingh succeeded him as Diwan. Maharao Kishorsingh died in 1828 without an heir. He was succeeded by his nephew Ramsingh II. A few years later, Jhala Madhosingh died and his son Madansingh became Musahab-ala of the State. He was rather foolish. With his unbecoming behaviour he strained his relations with the new Maharao. The Political Agent intervened. The harassed Maharao agreed to grant 17 parganas of Kota to Madansingh. Madansingh thus became the founder of the newly created principality of Jhalawad in 1838. Madansingh on his part gave up the hereditary rights of diwanship of Kota.

During the 1857 mutiny the Kota State forces raised a standard of revolt under the leadership of Jai Dayal and Maharab Khan against the EIC. The Political Agent, Burton, his two sons and an English doctor were killed. The revolutionaries occupied Kota and unfurled their flag on the city Kotwali. They interned the Maharao and took possession of all the 127 guns belonging to the State. The revolt gradually spread over the entire Kota State. The Maharao was freed by the Karauli State forces but it was not until March 1858 that Col. Robert came to Kota at the head of a British battalion and crushed the revolt. Several people were killed and the leaders of the movement including Jai Dayal and Maharab Khan were hanged. Maharao's rule over the State was restored after about six months.

Ramsingh died in 1866. He was succeeded by his adopted son Chhatarsal II. The British Government charged the Maharao with mismanagement in administration and appointed Nawab Faiz Ali Khan as Diwan in 1874. In 1876 the British Government placed the administration of the State in the hands of the Political Agent assisted by a council.

Since Chhatarsal had no male issue Apji Amarsingh of Palaittha wanted that his son Onkarsingh should be adopted by him. The Maharao and his Ranis however, opposed the move and instead adopted Udaisingh of Kota. On the death of Chhatarsal in 1889 Udaisingh ascended the throne in the name of Ummedsingh II. The latter was sent to Mayo College, Ajmer for his education against the wishes of the widows of the late Maharao. The widows were afraid that the young prince might be murdered by Apji and his supporters. The Maharao returned to Kota after two years. In the meanwhile, the Council of Regency appointed by the A.G.G. externed a number of supporters of the royal widows from the State and forfeited their properties at the instance of the Apji. The Council even resumed the jagir of Kunadi and externed the Jagirdar, Dwarkadas, from Kota.

With the conferment of full ruling powers in 1896 the young Maharao abolished the Council and pensioned off its members including Apji Amarsingh. He established the Mahkama Khash which was made the highest judicial and executive authority in the State. He appointed Chobe Raghunath Das as Diwan. He also established a separate office known as Mahkama Mal to look after the work relating to land revenue, forest and famine. He divided the State into 15 nizamat. Each nizamat which was in charge of a Nazim, was divided into mozas in charge of patwaris. The patwaris assisted by schnas were responsible for collection of land revenue. The salary of a patwari ranged between Rs. 6 to 12 and that of a sehna from Rs. 3 to Rs. 5. The other village functionaries like lamerdars, gaon balais etc. were given maufi lands in lieu of the duties performed by them.

The Maharao promulgated civil and criminal laws in the State on the lines of British India. The Nazims enjoyed civil and criminal powers. Appeals against their orders lay before the district magistrates (faujdar) who had the original jurisdiction in civil and criminal side too.

In 1896 Zalimsingh II of Jhalawar was externed from the State for gross mismanagement of the affairs of the State. Zalimsingh had no son and there was no direct descendent of the late Jhala Zalimsingh I

whose grandson Madansingh, had founded the State. The Maharao of Kota had been pressing the British Government for the return of the territory given to the Jhalas in 1838 in unfortunate circumstances. This was an opportune moment for the British Government to undo the injustice. Accordingly, 15 of the 17 parganas of Jhalawar were returned to Kota in January 1899. The event was celebrated throughout the State with all the fan fare.

Maharao Ummedsingh introduced many reforms in the State administration. It was during his time that revenue settlement was conducted throughout the State. He constructed several irrigation tanks like Ummedsagar, Badipura, Sahrid and Bilasgarh. He introduced improved seeds in agriculture and opened nine veterinary dispensaries for treatment of animals. He launched cooperative societies in the State. In 1927 he established a cooperative bank. He increased the State revenue to a considerable extent. The total State revenue in 1888-89, when Ummedsingh succeeded the throne, was Rs. 23 lakhs. By the time he died, the revenue rose to Rs. 43 lakhs. He reorganised the executive and judicial administration in the State.

In 1911 the Maharao established the first high school in the State at Kota. The Maharao left one intermediate college, two high schools and 109 schools when he died. In 1920 he constructed the water supply scheme for Kota. In 1927 he promulgated a law prohibiting the marriage of minor children. The Maharao died in December 1940 at the age of 67. He ruled over Kota for 52 years. His regime was considered to be one of the best in the history of Kota.

### **The Barath Family**

During Maharao Ummedsingh's reign, an event of great magnitude took place which shook the entire country. In 1914 the well known Dingal poet Thakur Kesarisingh Barath was arrested along with Soddatt Lahiri, Ramkaran and two others on charges of murder of Mahant Pyarelal of Jodhpur. They were sentenced to 20 years imprisonment. Barath was transferred from Kota jail to Hazaribag jail in Bihar. He was, however, released by the British Government after about 5 years. He returned to Kota only to find that his son Pratapsingh had been brutally murdered in Bareilly jail for his refusing to divulge the whereabouts of various revolutionaries in the country.

Kesarisingh Barath was born in a Charan family of Shahpura. He had joined the court of Maharana Fatehsingh of Udaipur at an early age.

Later on his services were placed at the disposal of the Maharao of Kota. Kesarisingh, his brother Zorawarsingh and son Pratapsingh, were in close touch with the revolutionaries led by the great Ras Behari Bose. Zorawarsingh and Pratapsingh were party to the conspiracy to assassinate the then Governor General Lord Hardinge. Hardinge rode an elephant in a procession taken out in Delhi in December 1912 to celebrate the shifting of the capital of India from Calcutta to Delhi. The revolutionaries hurled a bomb on Hardinge. Though his body-guard was killed on the spot, Hardinge escaped with minor injuries. Pratapsingh and his brother-in-law, Ishardan Asia were arrested but were let off after a few weeks for lack of evidence.

Later on Pratapsingh and Zorawarsingh were wanted by the police in some other cases. Both absconded. Zorawarsingh could not be arrested till he returned to Kota and died there in 1939, but thanks to the treachery of a station master, Pratapsingh was arrested at Ashanada railway station in Marwar and was sentenced to a 5 years' rigorous imprisonment in the Banaras conspiracy case. He was put in Bareilly jail where he was harassed and finally killed by the intelligence people.

### **Political Awakening**

In 1939 Nainuram Sharma and Pandit Abhinnehari founded the Kota Rajya Prajamandal with the object of establishing responsible Government in the State. Pandit Nainuram was killed by some persons in October 1939. Abhinnehari was now the sole Prajamandal leader. He was arrested during the Quit India Movement of August 1942 along with several others. A young Prajamandal worker, Nathulal Jain, led a procession in the capital and occupied the police headquarters. The processionists took over the administration of the city in their hands. They handed over the city back to the Maharao after two weeks on the assurance that the administration would no more take repressive measures in the State. The Prajamandal leaders arrested earlier were set free.

In 1948 Maharao Bhimsingh decided to form a popular government under the leadership of Abhinnehari. The decision, however, could not be given effect to as the State itself was merged in the United State of Rajasthan inaugurated on 25th March 1948, with Kota as capital. Maharao Bhimsingh was sworn in as Raj Pramukh of the new State and Prof. Gokul Lal Asawa of Shahpura as Prime Minister. Even before the new State started functioning, Mewar joined Rajasthan. The capital was

shifted from Kota to Udaipur where Maharana Bhopalsingh of Mewar was sworn in as Raj Pramukh, Maharao Bhimsingh as Upraj Pramukh and Manikyalal Varma as Premier.

### **Economy**

The area of the Kota State was 5687 sq. miles. Its population in 1891 was 7.19 lakhs. It came down to 5.45 lakhs in 1901 due to the famine of 1899-1900. It rose to 6.39 lakh in 1911 but came down to 6.30 lakhs in 1921. In 1941 the population of the State was 7.77 lakhs.

The State was drained by the Chambal and its tributaries the Kalisind and the Parvati. The annual average rainfall was 31 inches. The State was by and large fertile and produced two crops. While about 7000 acres of land was irrigated by the dam constructed near Atru on the river Parvati, the wells, which numbered 24,000, were the main stay of agriculture.

The main land-tenures were khalsa, jagir and maufi. The estates held in jagir and maufi were about one fourth of the area of the State. The Jagirdars were not dispossessed save for disloyalty or misconduct. The Jagirdars could not transfer their holdings but they could alienate a portion of their jagirs as a provision of their younger sons and other relatives but no succession or adoption could take place in a jagir without the consent of the Maharao and that too on payment of nazrana or a fee of succession. The most of the Jagirdars paid an annual tribute and supplied horsemen and foot soldiers for the service of the State. The lands in maufi were granted to individuals in charity or as a reward for services as also to temples and religious institutions. No land revenue was charged for the maufi lands.

In the Khalsa area two fifths of the produce of land was charged from the tenants as land revenue in the early 19th century. Later on Jhala Zalimsingh conducted settlement and fixed rates per bigha in terms of cash. He abolished all the hereditary tenures and brought the entire khalsa land under the proprietary management of the Government. In other words he made the cultivators as 'tenants at will' though no cultivator was disturbed from the land in his possession till he paid the land-revenue punctually. The fresh settlement was conducted in 1905. The rates per acre varied from As 4 to Rs. 5 As 8 for dry lands and from Rs. 2 As 4 to Rs. 17 As 9 for irrigated land.



The main exports from the State were cereals, pulses, opium oilseeds and cotton. The chief imports were salt, piece-goods, rice, sugar etc.

The total revenue of the State in 1908 was Rs. 31 lakhs which rose to Rs. 39 lakhs in 1945. The main sources of revenue of the State were land revenue and customs.

In literacy the Kota State stood lowest in whole of Rajasthan, with only 1.5 percent of total population able to read and write. The first government school was started in 1867. The number of schools rose to 19 in 1891, 31 in 1901 and 41 in 1905. There was one High School at Kota which was raised to an Intermediate College.

### **(15) Jhalawar**

The dispute between Maharao Ramsingh of Kota and his hereditary Diwan Madansingh Jhala led to the creation of Jhalawar State in 1837. Kota State had to make over 17 parganas yielding a revenue of Rs. 12 lakhs to Madansingh Jhala for his relinquishing the hereditary right of Diwanship of Kota as provided in the treaty signed between Kota and the East India Company. The chief of the new State was conferred the title of Maharaj-Rana by the British Government.

Madansingh died in 1845 and was succeeded by his son, Prithvi Singh. On latter's death his adopted son, Bakhala Singh, succeeded in the name of Zalim Singh II. Since the new ruler was minor, the administration was carried on by an officer of the Political Department assisted by a Regency Council. He was invested with ruling powers in 1884. Since he failed to govern the State properly the British Government deposed him in 1869 A.D. The prince spent rest of his life in Banaras where he received an allowance of Rs. 30,000 per year from the State.

Zalim Singh II had no son and there was no direct descended of the founder of State. The British Government, therefore, took the opportunity to restore 15 of the 17 parganas to Kota which had long been nurturing grievance for handing over a large part of the State to the Jhalas. The Jhalawar State now became a small principality of merely two parganas.

In 1899 Bhawani Singh, a descendent of Jhala Madhavsingh, the first Jhala Faujdar of Kota, was put on the throne by the British Government. On his death Bhawani Singh was succeeded by his son Rajendar Singh. The last ruler was Raj-Rana Harish Chandra. In 1947

Harish Chandra formed a popular ministry headed by himself. The other ministers were Kanhiya Lal Mittal and Mangi Lal Bhavya of the State Prajamandal. The State was merged in the United State of Rajasthan in March 1948. It became part of Greater Rajasthan in April 1949. Thus ended the existence of 111 years old tiny State of Jhalawar.

The population of the State in 1891 was 3.4 lakhs, in 1891, 3.44 lakhs and in 1901, 0.91 lakhs. The sudden fall in State's population was mainly due to return of 15 parganas to Kota in 1897. The total area of the State was 824 sq. miles. At the time of merger of the State, the population of the State was 1.22 lakhs and revenue Rs. 8 lakhs.

The State was divided into five tehsils, each incharge of a tehsildar who also enjoyed some judicial powers. Over the tehsildars were the Diwani adalat and Faujdari adalat. Then there was an appellate court which heard cases not only against the judgments of Diwani and Faujdari courts but also enjoyed original jurisdiction.

## (16) Sirohi

### History

On the death of Udaibhan in jail in 1847, Shivsingh was formally recognised as ruler of Sirohi by the East India Company. The State was now placed under the Political Agent at Neemuch. The same year Shivsingh gave a large part of Abu to the East India Company for establishment of a sanatorium.

In the mutiny of 1857 the men of Indian units of the British army posted at Eranpura reached Mt. Abu, Maharao Shivsingh helped the British in throwing out the mutineers in appreciation of which the British Government wrote off the arrears of tribute and reduced the annual tribute by half. In 1861 Shivsingh handed over the administration of his State to his son, Ummedsingh. The very next year the former died.

Soon Ummedsingh had to face trouble from his younger brothers. He silenced them by giving them jagirs. Later on the Bhils, the Meenas and the Girashias in connivance with certain Jagirdars were engaged in loot and plunder. The result was that there was complete lawlessness in the State. The British garrison at Eranpura intervened and brought the situation under control.

Due to mismanagement, the State was in heavy debts. The British government warned the Maharao that unless he set things right, it would be compelled to interfere in affairs of the State. The warning had a desired

effect. The Maharao introduced a number of administrative reforms and reduced the debt considerably.

On the death of Ummedsingh in 1875 his only son Kesarisingh succeeded him. He introduced land reforms and effected economy in the administration and within five years the State was free from all debts. He crushed the rebellious Jagirdars. He even shot dead the Jagirdar of Rewarda and confiscated his jagir. During his regime, hospitals, post and telegraph offices were opened in the State. The begar was prohibited. In 1917 the Maharaja gave Mt. Abu to the British Government on lease where the office of the A.G.G. was established. He abdicated the throne in favour of his son Swaroop Ramsingh in April 1920. He died in 1925.

### **Adivasi movement**

In 1922 the Bhils and Girashias of Sirohi and other neighbouring States launched a movement under the leadership of Motilal Tejawat of Mewar against the highhandedness of the Jagirdars in the matter of land revenue, lag bags and begar. The British army had to be called in to quell the agitation. In a number of villages in Rohida tehsil the British army took to firing which resulted in the killing of more than 1800 men, women and children. The army also burnt out 600 houses of the Bhils. Earlier in 1908 the Bhils of the State had participated in the movement for social reforms launched by Guru Govind. A number of people were killed when the British army fired on the Bhils gathered on the Managarh hill to participate in the annual conference.

### **Political awakening**

Some young workers of Sirohi made attempts to establish Prajamandal in 1934 and 1936 but failed. In January 1939 Gokul Bhai Bhatt, a resident of Hathal in Sirohi, returned from Bombay and established the Prajamandal. Rameshwar Dayal Agrawal and Dharamchand Surana were sentenced to imprisonment for a few months for participating in the activities of Prajamandal. In the 'Quit India' movement of 1942 the workers of the Sirohi Prajamandal held demonstrations against the ruler and the British government. No one, however, was arrested.

In later years Maharao Swaroop Ramsingh had embraced Islam. On his death in January 1946 at Delhi he was given a burial according to his will. As Swaroop Ramsingh had no issue, the British government put Tejsingh of Mandor on the throne. As he was not the right claimant

to the throne, the people of the State started agitation. It was, however, not until India became free that Tejsingh was removed and Abhaysingh was declared as ruler. How the State was merged in Rajasthan after India became free is a fascinating story which will be found in the chapter relating to formation of Rajasthan.

### **Economy etc.**

The State was governed by the ruler with the assistance of a Diwan and other officers such as Revenue Officer and Superintendent of customs. The State was divided into 14 tehsils each headed by a Tehsildar who also enjoyed judicial powers. There was a Judicial Officer who functioned as a Munsiff Magistrate. The Diwan was ex-officio District and Sessions Judge. The final authority in all executive and judicial matters was the Maharao himself.

The Sirohi State was bounded on north, north-west and west by Jodhpur, on the east by Udaipur and on the south by Palanpur, Danta and Edar. The State was broken up by hills and rocky ranges. The Mount Abu, situated in the south of the State, had, Guru-Shikhar, the highest peak, with 5650 feet above the sea level. The only river of importance in the State was the Western Banas. It was a non-perennial river. The rainfall on Mt. Abu was 58 inches but in rest of the State it was about 21 inches.

The State had an area of 1964 sq. miles with 413 towns and villages. The population of the State was 1.85 lakhs in 1891, 1.50 lakhs in 1901, 1.85 lakhs in 1911, 1.87 lakhs in 1921, 2.17 lakhs in 1931 and 2.34 lakhs in 1941. The fall in the population in 1891-1900 decade was due to the great famine of 1899-1900.

The most numerous caste in the State was that of the Mahajans which constituted 12 percent of the total population. The Rajputs, the Bhills and the Girashias were the other major castes in the State.

About 60% of the population depended on agriculture. The principal crops were maize, bajra, moong, khulath, till, barley, wheat, gram, and mustard. The irrigation was mainly from wells which numbered 5000. In the early 20th century four tanks capable of irrigating 4700 acres were constructed. The main exports were oilseeds, hides and ghee while the imports included foodgrains, piece goods, salt and sugar. The Rajputana-Malwa Railway passed through the State for about 40 miles. The Grant Trunk Road from Agra to Ahmedabad ran about 68 miles in the State.

The land tenures were similar to those in other parts of Rajputana. Of the 413 villages in the State, 157 were in khalsa, 202 in jagirs and 14 in 'sashan'. In the khalsa area, the cultivators had permanent occupancy rights. The land revenue varied from one-fourth to one-third of the produce which was mostly collected in kind.

There were three classes of Jagirdars in the State, viz., the relatives of the ruler, the Thakurs whose forefathers assisted the rulers in wars and those who rendered other services to the State. All jagir-holders paid tribute to the State varying from 3/8th to 1/2 of the land revenue realised by them. Besides, they also paid Nazarana or fee on accession. Sashan lands were those granted to temples and members of the Brahmin, Charan and Bhat communities. The total revenue of the State in 1905 was Rs. 3.5 lakhs. In 1945-46 it was about Rs. 19 lakhs. The main sources of revenue were customs and land revenue.

### **(17) Bharatpur State**

#### **History**

The story of Bharatpur during the British period was one of continued interference of the East India Company (EIC) in the affairs of the State. Since Maharaja Randhirsingh had no issue, he had adopted his cousin Durjanshal. On the death of Randhirsingh in 1823 his brother Baldeosingh usurped the throne with the connivance of the E.I.C. Baldeosingh died in 1825 and his seven year old son, Balwant Singh, succeeded him. Durjanshal put him behind bars and declared himself as ruler. The E.I.C. sent an army which occupied Bharatpur and other fortresses. Durjanshal and the members of his family were arrested. The E.I.C. reinstalled Balwantsingh on the throne and appointed his mother Imarat Kanwar as regent. A little later the mother queen was removed as regent and a council of regency headed by the Political Agent was set up.

Balwantsingh was conferred with ruling powers in 1835. He died in 1853 leaving behind an infant son Jaswantsingh. The E.I.C. again set-up a regency council with the Political Agent at the head. In 1857 the mutiny broke-out. The Political Agent sent the State forces to Dausa to assist Captain Nixon against the Marahata leader Tantia Tope. In the meanwhile the Meos and the Gujars in the State raised the standard of revolt against the E.I.C. and joined hands with the mutineers. The British officials ran away from Bharatpur. The mutineers' writ now ran through out the State till the end of the mutiny in the country in 1858.

Jaswantsingh was conferred with full ruling powers in 1871. In 1879 he signed a protocol with the British Govt. (successors of E.I.C.) surrendering the right to manufacture salt in the State in lieu of which the British Government agreed to pay Rs. 1.5 lakhs annually to the State as compensation. In 1884 he abolished all transit duties except on intoxicating drugs and liquors<sup>1</sup>. He died in 1893.

Jaswantsingh was succeeded by his son Ramsingh. The latter was however, deprived of his ruling powers in 1895 by the British Government. The administration was run by a consultative council under the supervision of the Political Agent. In 1900 Ramsingh was removed from the throne on charges of murdering one of his servants. His son Krishansingh was then merely a year old. The administration of Bharatpur thus remained in the hands of the Political Agent till 1918 when Krishansingh became major.

Krishansingh proved to be a dynamic and enlightened ruler. He introduced several reforms in the State. He established municipalities and villages panchayats and electrified the streets of Bharatpur. He set up cooperative banks with a view to save the farmers from exploitation by the money-lenders. He declared Hindi as the official language, abolished 'begar' and expanded education in the State. He extended full support to the "Shudhi movement" launched by Swami Shradhanand. Above all he effectively stopped British interference in the internal affairs of the State. He presided over the All India Jat Conference held at Pushkar. In 1924 the floods caused immense misery to the people of the State. The Maharaja himself actively participated in the relief operations and endeared himself to the people.

In 1927 the 17th annual session of the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan was held at Bharatpur. Eminent national leaders like Ravindranath Tagore, Madan Mohan Malaviya and Jinnah came to Bharatpur to attend the session. The Maharaja made them his personal guests during their stay at Bharatpur. As if it was not enough the Maharaja decided to set up an elected Assembly with a view to enable people to share power. The British Government exhausted its patience. They removed Krishansingh from the throne and exiled him from the State on charges of "financial mismanagement". They took over the administration and appointed Duncan Mackenzie as administrator. The Maharaja died on March, 28th 1929 while still in exile.

1. Imperial Gazetteers of India, Rajputana (1908) p. 326.

The first act of Mackenzie on assuming charge was to extern Jagnath Das Adhikari, who had established Hindi Sahitya Samiti in 1912 at Bharatpur and was a confidant of the deposed Maharaja. The people of Bharatpur rebuffed the British Government by giving a tumultuous farewell to Adhikari. Mackenzie also arrested Thaku Deshraj, a leading political and social worker.

On Krishansingh's death, Brijendrasingh became ruler of Bharatpur. In 1930-31 some enthusiastic workers established Prajaparishad and Yuvak Dal in the State. The same year a number of workers from the State went to Ajmer to participate in the "Salt Satyagrah" launched by Mahatma Gandhi. The first concrete step towards forming a political party was taken by Kishanlal Joshi who established Prajamandal in the State in 1938. Gopilal Yadav was made President. Thakur Deshraj, Kishanlal Joshi, Yugal Kishore Chaturvedi and Master Aditendra were appointed as Vice President, General Secretary, Publicity Secretary and Treasurer respectively. As the State Government refused to recognise it, the Prajamandal started satyagrah in April 1939. About 600 persons including 32 women were arrested. In October 1939 a settlement was arrived at between the State Government and the Prajamandal according to which, the name of Prajamandal was changed to Prajaparishad. The State Government on its part recognised the Parishad and released the Satyagrahis.

The Prajaparishad participated in the 'Quit India Movement' of August 1942. A number of workers were arrested. In the meanwhile heavy rains in the State caused serious floods. The Prajaparishad suspended the agitation and decided to participate in the relief work. The State Government welcomed the gesture of the Parishad and released the satyagrahis. It also agreed to set up an Assembly with a majority of elected members.

The elections to the "Brij Pratinidhi Parishad" (Legislative Assembly) were held in 1943. The Prajaparishad captured 22 of the 37 elected seats. It, however, found that the Assembly was merely a debating society having no teeth. It, therefore decided to boycott it. The leader of the Prajaparishad party in the Assembly, Yugal Kishore Chaturvedi, and the Secretary Mr. Raj Bahadur, were arrested.

In January 1947 the Viceroy, Lord Wavell, and Maharaja Sardulsingh of Bikaner came to Bharatpur for bird shooting in the Ghana Bird Sanctuary on the invitation of the Maharaja of Bharatpur. The State administration engaged some Jatavs and Kolis in begar to recover the birds from the lake in severe cold. The Prajaparishad launched a movement against taking begar from the people. They took out a huge procession and showed black flags to the visiting VIPs. The movement reached a peak on January 15, 1947. The Parishad workers staged a dharna in front of the government offices. The police used force resulting in serious injuries to dozens of satyagrahis. The Government promulgated section 144 in the city and arrested a number of workers. The city observed complete hartal continuously for three weeks. On February 5, 1947 Ramesh Swami, a leading worker of the Prajaparishad, was run over by a bus at Bhusawar at the instance of the local police. Swami became a martyr.

As the political scene in the country was changing fast, the State Government released the workers unconditionally in July 1947. In December 1947 a popular government was installed. Master Aditendra and Gopilal Yada on behalf of the Prajaparishad and Thakur Deshraj and Choudhary Haridatt representing the Kisan- Sabha were included in the Cabinet.

On January 30, 1948 Mahatma Gandhi was assassinated at Delhi. In the course of investigation Maharaja Bharatpur came under shadow. During these very days communal riots on large scale took place in the State. The hands of some members of the ruling family was suspected in these riots. The Government of India had taken over the Alwar State on similar charges against the ruler and the Prime Minister of Alwar. Taking all these things into consideration, the Maharaja of Bharatpur voluntarily handed over the administration of his State to the Government of India. On March 18, 1948 the State was integrated along with Alwar, Dholpur and Karauli into a newly constituted "Matsya-Union".

### **Administrative Setup**

At the apex was a council consisting of four members. Each member of the council was in charge of a number of departments. The council functioned under the overall supervision of the Political Agent. The State was divided into two Nizamats namely Bharatpur and Deeg. Each Nizamat had a nazim and a deputy collector who discharged judicial and executive functions respectively.



In the administration of justice the laws of British India were adopted. The lowest courts were those of the Naib Tehsildars who were third class Magistrates and tried civil suits not exceeding Rs. 50 in value. The Tehsildars were second class Magistrates and decided civil suits for sums not exceeding Rs. 200. Appeals against decisions of these courts lay before the Nazim who enjoyed the powers of a District Magistrate and tried civil suits without any pecuniary limit. The Civil and Session Judge heard the appeals against the judgments of the Nazims on the civil side. He tried original sessions cases and could pass sentence upto ten years' imprisonment. The highest court was the Council. It could sentence a person to death with the approval of the A.G.G.

### **Society**

In 1901, the population of the State was 6,27,000 amongst whom only 17,800 persons were able to read and write. About 81 percent of the population was of Hindus and the rest were Muslims. The language spoken was Brij.

According to the census of 1901 the most numerous caste in Bharatpur was of the Chamars (a scheduled caste). They were about 16% of the total population and were mostly landless labourers. They were treated practically as untouchables. They were the poorest amongst the poor. The Jats were 15% of the population. As the State was ruled by a Jat dynasty, the Jats dominated in every walk of life. They were sturdy and hard working agriculturists. They were also warriors. The army of Bharatpur consisted mostly of Jats during the early period of the Jat rule. They practiced polygamy with impunity and could live with a woman of any caste. Widows were 'sold' indiscriminately. A clan of Jats known as Dung practiced even female infanticide, though this evil custom was later on given up. They ate meat, drunk liquor and chew tobacco. The education amongst them was extremely limited.<sup>1</sup>

The Meos constituted about 8%. They were settled mostly in Kaman, Nagar and Paharai tehsils. The area inhabited by them was called Mewat. Most of them were converts from Hindus. They claimed their descent from the Rajputs. They inter-married with Meenas upto Akbar's time. Incidentally the Meos and the Meenas both were once notoriously predatory. Although the Meos still celebrated many Hindu

<sup>1</sup> Rajputana Gazetters Vol. 1. 1879 (161-162)

festivals like Holi and Diwali and burn their deads, they practise circumcision and "nikah".

### **Economy**

Unlike other States of Rajasthan, the jagir area in Buaratpur was very small. As much as 87.6% of the land was khalsa. Of the rest 11.8% was maufi and 0.6% was istmarari. In khalsa, the tenancy was stable. It could be disturbed only when the tenant failed to pay the land revenue. The right of tenancy was heritable but could not be alienated without the consent of the State. The tenancy could in no case be transferred to a non-agriculturist. Such a progressive provision did not exist in the tenancy laws of any other State or province of the country.

The maufi land was granted to Brahmins for supporting the religious institutions. The maufidars were not required to pay land revenue. The istimarars held villages on fixed and permanent rent. The land was granted rent free to people in lieu of the military services rendered by them. The near relations of the ruling family, known as Thakurs, also enjoyed rent-free land. In both the cases the land was heritable but not alienable.

In khalsa the State charged one third of the produce as land-revenue upto 1855 when the first summary settlement was made. The land revenue was fixed on the basis of the average collections in the previous ten years. The total revenue of the State on the basis of this settlement was Rs. 14.2 lakhs.

The first regular settlement was made in 1900. The assessment per acre of wet land varied from Rs. 2 to Rs. 8 and for dry land from Rs. 1.25 to Rs. 2.50. The land revenue accrued to the State in 1901 was Rs. 21.4 lakhs. The land holdings of the farmers were generally small i.e. from 4 to 5 bighas. Of course, a few wealthy farmers particularly the Thakurs possessed 300 to 400 bighas of land. The Thakurs engaged labour for cultivating their land. The wages paid to agriculture labour ranged from one anna to two annas a day.

The State formed part of the alluvial basin of the Ganga and the Yamuna. About 80% of the land was cultivable. The average rainfall was 24 inches. Nearly 25% of the cultivable land was irrigated from wells and bunds. There were 22000 wells in the State as early as 1908. Besides, there were 164 bunds including the Bareta bund built across the Kakand river in 1897, Ajan bund which received the inundated water of

the Banganga and Gambhiri rivers and the Sikri bund constructed across the Ruparel river in 1840. The water from the bunds was supplied to the Khalsa areas free of charge. In the case of jagirdari and inami lands a cess of Rs. one per bigha was charged. In spite of fairly good rains and the irrigation facilities, ordinarily only one crop either Rabi or Kharif was raised. The use of manure and improved agriculture practices remained taboo till the end of the 19th century. The principal crops grown were wheat, cotton, sugarcane, rapeseed, paupy and tobacco. The State was surplus in food-grains. Even as early as 1895 it exported food grains worth Rs. 5.74 lakhs. In times of drought, which was rare, the State imported food grains from the neighbouring province of U.P.

The agriculture products were cheap. According to the data available for 1895 the rates of wheat, barley and gram were 19 seers, 27 seers, 30 seers per rupee respectively. Even in the countrywide famine of 1899-1900, the rates of wheat, barley and gram were 11 seers, 13 seers and 12 seers per rupee respectively. In 1905 the wheat was sold at 18 seers per rupee, gram at 22 seers, bajra at 28 seers, maize at 25 seers and pulses at 16 seers per rupee. In 1907-08, the Kharif production fell to one third due to drought. The prices of food grains, therefore, shot up. The wheat, barley, maize and gram were sold at the rate of 8 seers, 14 seers, 14 seers and 9 seers per rupee respectively.

In 1912 the State made efforts to improve agriculture. A depot of improved seeds was set up and seeds were distributed to the farmers. A conference of farmers and jamindars was held to educate them to introduce improved agricultural appliances and adopt modern system of agriculture. According to the Administrative Report of the State for 1911-12, even agricultural machines were displayed at the conference.

In 1916-17 the food production was 12 lakhs maunds in Kharif and 11 lac maunds in Rabi. In spite of this bumper production the prices did not fall because of the general boom due to the first world war. The wages of the labour rose to annas 5 in case of men and annas 4 in case of woman. In 1918-19 the prices of food grains further rose. Wheat was sold at 8 seers per rupee and the coarse grain from 10 to 11 seers per rupee.

The credit cooperative societies were introduced in the State as early as 1915 to save the farmers from exploitation from money lenders.

There were no forests in the State. Of course an area of 38 sq. miles was reserved for fuel and fodder for consumption of the ruling family. The State was poor in mineral wealth. Copper and iron were found in the hills in the south but the mines had not been worked for decades. There were a number of sand stone quarries. The stone produced was of two varieties - dark red and yellowish white. The quarries at Bansi-Paharpur supplied material for the construction of various Mughal monuments at Agra, Delhi and Fatehpur Sikri.

The main export from the State were food grains, oilseeds, cotton, ghee, tobacco and sand stone to the neighbouring areas of Delhi, U.P., Alwar and Jaipur. The imports included rice, sugar, salt and clothes.

The total revenue of the State during the earlier years of the 20th century was about Rs. 30 lakhs. The main sources of revenue were: land revenue Rs. 21 lakhs, customs duty Rs. 3 lakhs, excise Rs. 0.12 lakhs and payment under the Salt agreement Rs. 1.5 lakhs. The State had abolished lag bags (petty taxes) on various trades and professions as early as 1897-98. At the time of merger the revenue of the State was Rs. 50 lakhs. The figures of expenditure showed that the State spent a fairly good amount on public works.

### **(18) Dholpur**

The Dholpur State was the creation of the East India Company. The territory was ruled by Tanwars (Tomars) of Delhi. Later it was part of the Delhi Sultanate and the Mughal empire. With the disintegration of the Mughal empire, it was occupied by the Marahatas.

In September 1803 General Lake of the East India Company defeated Daulatram Sindhia at the battle of Laswadi. The General occupied the Marahata territory of Dholpur, Bari and Rajakheda. At the same time Rana Kiratsingh, a scion of the Bamraolia clan of Jats, captured Gohad near Gwalior from the Sindhias with the help of General Lake. As the ruler of Bharatpur and the Marahatas had often joined hands against the British, Gen. Lake decided to create a buffer state of Dholpur between Bharatpur and Gwalior. He, therefore, gave Dholpur to Kiratsingh in exchange of Gohad which was returned to Sindhia. It was how the Jat State of Dholpur came into existence.

The ruling family of Bamraolia Jats originally belonged to Banraolia, a village near Agra. In 1505, a member of the family received the grant of the territory of Gohad from the local Rajput ruler and assumed the title of "Rana". Gohad changed hands several times between the Marabatas and the Jats till Rana Kiratsingh finally captured it.

Kiratsingh, who became the ruler of the newly carved out State of Dholpur in 1805, died in 1826. He was succeeded by his son Bhagwantsingh. During his reign the mutiny of 1857 broke out. About 5000 Marahata soldiers from Gwalior and Indore entered Dholpur State and joined hands with the commander of the Dholpur army and other senior officials. The mutineers exercised control over the State till December 1857 when the army from Patiala defeated them and restored Dholpur to Bhagwantsingh who died in 1870. Bhagwantsingh was succeeded by his grand son Nihalsingh. The latter died in 1901 and was succeeded by his minor son Ramsingh. The young Rana was conferred with ruling powers in 1905. He died in 1911 without an issue and was succeeded by his younger brother Udaibhansingh.

Though Dholpur was one of the smallest States in Rajasthan Udaibhansingh was an influential member of the Chamber of Princes. He was a member of the Indian delegations which participated in the two Round Table Conferences in England. When India became free in 1947, he created lot of difficulties in the matter of accession of princely states to India. He tried hard in league with the Nawab of Bhopal to persuade Maharaja Hanumantsingh of Jodhpur and certain other princes of Rajasthan to accede to Pakistan. His efforts were, however, frustrated, by the Government of India.

In March 1948 the Government of India merged Dholpur in the Matsya Union along with other neighbouring States of Alwar, Bharatpur and Karauli. Udaibhansingh was made Raj Pramukh of the new State with the Alwar Prajamandal leader Sobharam, as Chief Minister. The Matsya Union became part of the Rajasthan in May 1949.

The area of Dholpur State was 1773 sq. miles and population 2.87 lakhs. The river Chambal formed the boundary of Dholpur with Gwalior for about 60 miles. The other rivers which flew in the State were the Banganga, the Parwati etc. The average rainfall was 25 inches. There was a large number of tanks which provided irrigation to more than 2000 acres of land. The land was fertile.

There were 380 villages in Khalsa, 61 in jagir and 41 in maufi. The administration was obviously primitive. Being a small State it could hardly afford the luxury of modern administrative set up. At the head of the administration was the Maharaja who was assisted by a Diwan. There were powerful hereditary panchayats in the villages which decided all types of disputes civil or criminal.

The State was divided into six tehsils each incharge of a Tehsildar who was responsible for collection of land revenue. He also enjoyed petty judicial functions. There was a Hakim who functioned as some sort of a Munsiff-Magistrate for the whole State. The Ijilas Khas, presided over by the ruler, was the highest court of appeal. There was a High school at Dholpur and middle and primary schools in other towns. There was a dispensary at the capital.

The social workers like Jwala Prasad Jigyasu and Joharilal Indu founded the Prajamandal in 1938. The State arrested a number of workers who were released after quite a few months. In 1946 the State police fired on a public meeting at Takhimare in which Thakur Chhatarsingh and Panchaursingh became martyrs.

## (19) Tonk

### History

Tonk was perhaps the only State in India which was scattered in six 'islands' separated from each other by distances varying from 20 to 250 miles. The three enclaves Tonk, Aligarh and Nimbaheda were situated in Rajputana Agency while the other three Chhabara, Pirawa and Siroj in Central India. The State had a total area of 2543 sq. miles of which about 110 sq. miles of territory fell in Rajasthan and the rest in Central India.

The State had a chequered history. When the Mughal empire was on its last leg a number of wandering groups of Pindaris were engaged in looting and plundering all over Rajasthan and Central India. One of such groups was headed by Taleh Khan Pathan of the Buner tribe. His son Hyat Khan had owned some property at Muradabad where his son Amir Khan was born in 1768.

Starting his career as a mercenary soldier in the army of Jaswant Rao Holkar, Amir Khan built his own force within a few years. He fought on the side of Holkar against Sindhia, Peshwa and the East India Company on the condition that he would share the booty and the

territorial conquests on 50:50 basis. Consequently he received the pargana of Sironj in 1798 and the parganas of Tonk, Nimbaheda and Chhabara in subsequent years. In the meanwhile EIC established its stranglehold in Rajasthan. It thrashed the Marahatas and chased the Pindaris from place to place. At this critical moment Jhala Zalimsingh, the all powerful faujdar of Kota, gave shelter to the family of Amir Khan.

Having become free from the worries of the family, Amir Khan continued his predatory activities in Rajasthan and elsewhere. The crafty brigand exploited the differences amongst the rulers of Jodhpur, Jaipur and Mewar over the question of marriage of the Mewar princess, Krishna Kumari and assumed the role of an arbitrator. The hapless Maharana, Bhimsingh, killed Krishna Kumari by administering poison at the dictates of Amir Khan. The latter collected huge sums of money from the three rulers in the process. Subsequently in the war between Jaipur and Jodhpur, he first sided with Jaipur and helped it in capturing most of the Marwar territory and then crossed over to Jodhpur and defeated the Jaipur forces.

While the E.I.C. continued to maintain pressure on Amir Khan it was equally eager to reach settlement with him. The E.I.C. succeeded in bringing him round and entered into a treaty with him in November 1817. The Company recognised Amir Khan as ruler of Tonk State and conferred on him the title of Nawab. It also gave him the pargana of Rampura (Aligarh). Amir Khan on his part dissolved his Pindari brigade and surrendered his guns to the E.I.C. which paid him in turn Rs. 3 lakhs for settling the accounts of the disbanded Pindaris.

Amir Khan died in 1834. His son Wazir Khan, succeeded him. When the mutiny broke out in 1857 in the country, the Nawab remained loyal to the E.I.C. but a large part of his army joined hands with the mutineers. In early 1858 Tantya Tope, one of the leaders of the Mutiny, reached Tonk. In the battle on the bank of the river Banas, Tope defeated the Nawab's loyal forces. Tope arrested the Nawab's minister Fajj-u-Allah Khan and occupied Tonk. In the mean while Major Eden of the E.I.C. left Delhi for Tonk at a head of a big army. Tope and his army left for Nathdwara after looting the town before Eden reached Tonk.

During the mutiny, the Hakim of Nimbaheda joined hands with the mutineers. Maharana of Udaipur dispatched his army under the Political Agent and occupied Nimbahera. After the mutiny was over

Nimbaheda was returned to the Nawab. For the loyalty shown by Wazir Khan to the British Company, his gun-salute was raised from 15 to 17. He died in 1864 and was succeeded by his son Mohammad Ali Khan, who soon became unpopular with his subjects. He forbade the construction and repairs of the Hindu temples. He resorted to every means for wringing money from Jagirdars and cultivators. In 1867 he arrested the Chief of Lawa and killed some of his men. The British Government deposed him and put him behind bars in Banaras jail where he died in 1869. The British Government ran the administration during his absence. It separated the Chiefship of Lawa from Tonk and took it under its direct control. Mohammad Ali Khan was succeeded by his son Mohammad Ibrahim Khan. As Ibrahim Khan was minor, the State was administered by a Council of Regency under a British officer. The Nawab was conferred with ruling power in 1870.

During the reign of Ibrahim Khan a movement took place in 1920-21 against the abnormal rise in prices of foodgrains and corruption in the administration. On January 14, 1921 the agitators surrounded the Nawab outside the Jama Masjid and maltreated him. The Nawab assured the people to fix the rates of foodgrains and stop exports. The Nawab, however, did not fulfill the assurances given to the people. In the meanwhile the Nawab expelled the Saiyads from the State. The people again started the agitation. With the help of the British army, the Nawab crushed the agitation and arrested a number of people. There was criticism of the British Government in the press for sending the British army to Tonk. Consequently the arrested people were released and all restrictions on holding meetings were removed. An advisory committee was set up to attend to the grievances of the people. Ibrahim Khan died in 1930. He was succeeded by Sadat Ali Khan.

The new Nawab established an Assembly known as Majlise Amma in 1939. It consisted of 26 members out of which 12 were elected by the village panchayats. The State was merged in the United State of Rajasthan which was formed in March 1948.

### **Demography**

The number of towns and villages in the State was 1294. The population was 3.38 lakhs in 1881, 3.80 lakhs in 1891 and 2.73 lakhs in 1901. The decrease of 20% in population in the decade between 1891



and 1901 was due to the famine of 1899-1900. The population before the merger of the State in Rajasthan was 3.54 lakhs according to 1941 census. The Hindus accounted for 82 percent and the Muslims 15%. The principal castes were Chamars (10%), Brahmins (6%), Mahajans and Meenas (5% each). The people depended mostly on agriculture. Some 10% people were engaged in leather work.

### **Economy**

As indicated earlier the three districts of Tonk were situated in Rajasthan while the other three in Central India. Incidentally all the six districts were fertile. It seems Amir Khan chose his 'prizes' from the rulers with due care. About 69% of the State was in khalsa, while the rest was divided in jagir, istimarari and maufi. The majority of the Jagirdars were members of the ruling family. The tributes paid by them to the State was one fifth of their income from the land revenue. The adoption by Jagirdars was subject to Nawab's approval. Istimarars held land on payment of a fixed 'quit rent' and had to render military help to the State in case of need. They also paid nazarana at the time of succession. Maufi land was granted as a reward or in charity and the holders had to pay a fixed sum annually known as 'salana'. In khalsa area the system was ryotwari. The tenant paid land revenue to the State. He could not be ejected from his land so long as he paid the land revenue. He had also the right to alienate the land by sale, mortgage or otherwise.

Earlier the land revenue was collected in cash as well as in kind. Often the villages were given on 'mukata'. The Mukatedars exploited the tenants. The system was abolished in 1887 when survey and settlement operations were undertaken and cash rates introduced. The rates were revised in 1887 and 1889. The revised rates varied from As. 3 to Rs. 6 for dry lands and Rs. 3 to Rs. 20 for wet lands.

The annual revenue of the State was about Rs. 11 lakhs in 1907 which rose to Rs. 21 lakhs in 1945. The main sources of revenue were land revenue and customs. The State had its own currency in some of its districts. In the rest of the State the British rupee was the legal tender.

The principal crops of the State were jowar, gram, maize, wheat, cotton and pauppy. The irrigation was entirely from wells. The chief exports were cereals, cotton, opium, hides and hand-woven cloth. The imports were salt, sugar, rice, tobacco and iron and steel.

## **(20) Ajmer Merwars**

### **History**

Soon after the treaty with the Marahata ruler, Daulat Ram Sindhia, was signed, General D. Ochterlony of the East India Company occupied Ajmer on July 28, 1818. Wilder was appointed as Superintendent of Ajmer district. The Mers living in the neighbouring Merwara were constant source of trouble not only to Ajmer but to Mewar and Jodhpur States as well. In November 1820 the Mers rose in revolt against the Ajmer administration. They cut off a number of police posts and killed a number of policemen. The Superintendent with the cooperation of Mewar and Marwar brought the unruly Mers under control. It was, however, soon discovered that Merwara, which was divided between Ajmer, Mewar and Jodhpur administrations, could not be governed properly unless brought under a unified command. Consequently it was integrated into a single administrative unit with the cooperation of Mewar and Jodhpur in 1823 and put under the charge of a Superintendent.

In 1842 the districts of Ajmer and Merwara were placed under a common Superintendent, Col. Dixon. In 1853 Dixon was redesignated as Commissioner for Ajmer Merwara. During his administration, Col. Dixon constructed a large number of tanks for irrigation and engaged the volatile Mers in agriculture. He gave impetus to trade and industry by founding the town of Beawar or 'Naya Shahar'.

In 1857 Col. Dixon died. The same year the mutiny broke out. The British Government had maintained a cantonment at Nasirabad, a few miles away from Ajmer. On May 28, the two native regiments of infantry rose up in arms. They seized the guns of the battery and plundered and burnt government bungalows and public buildings. They killed two of their British officers and wounded three others and then left for Delhi to join other mutineers. The calm was restored in Ajmer-Marwar in 1858 as elsewhere in the country.

In 1857 Capt. B.T. Llyod was appointed as the first deputy commissioner of Ajmer-Merwara and was placed under the A.G.G., Rajputana. The A.G.G. was accountable to the N.W.P. Government. In 1871 the administration of Ajmer-Marwara was put direct under the Foreign and Political Department of the Government of India. The

A.G.G. for Rajputana, who oversaw the affairs of the princely States of the region, became ex-officio Chief Commissioner of Ajmer-Merwara.

### **Political Awakening**

Like other British provinces in India, Ajmer became politically conscious much earlier than the neighbouring princely States. When the great revolutionary, Ras Behari Bose, decided to organise an armed struggle against the British Government in 1914-15, Ajmer was one of the important centres of his activities. Thakur Gopalsingh of Kharwa, Bhoopsingh of Mathura (Vijaisingh 'Pathik') and Seth Damodar Das Rathi of Beawar were in charge of organising the movement in Rajasthan. They had recruited about 2000 youngmen and collected 30,000 guns to launch the struggle on the appointed day i.e. February 21, 1915. Unfortunately, however, the British intelligence came to know about the countrywide 'conspiracy'. The British Government arrested a number of revolutionaries in the country before the 'D' day. Thakur Gopalsingh immediately dispersed his followers and hid the arms and ammunitions underground. Gopalsingh and his associate Bhoopsingh were put behind bars in the fort of Tadgarh. Bhoopsingh escaped from the fort and went away to Mewar, where disguised as "Vijaysingh Pathik" he led the famous Bijolia movement. Gopalsingh was released from jail in 1920.

In October 1920 Arjunlal Sethi, Kesrisingh Barath, Ramnarayan Choudhary and Vijaysingh Pathik founded the Rajasthan Sewa Sangh at Wardha. The Sangh's office was later on transferred to Ajmer. The object of the Sangh was to assist the agrarian movements in various Rajasthan States. The Sangh also published a newspaper known as 'Rajasthan Kesari'. The Sangh, however, broke in 1927 after doing lot of good work due to differences amongst its leaders.

In 1926, Hari Bhau Upadhyaya, a disciple of Gandhiji, came to Ajmer and founded a women's institution known as 'Hatundi Ashram' a few miles away from Ajmer. Arjunlal Sethi at that time was the President of the Provincial Congress Committee of Ajmer Merwara. Soon serious differences arose between Upadhyaya and Sethi. The former became President of the P.C.C. Sethi gradually withdrew from active political life and engaged himself in Hindu-Muslim unity.

In April 1930 a number of Congress workers arrested in the famous Salt Satyagraha. These included Hari Bhau Upadhyaya, Vijaysingh Pathik, Arjunlal Sethi, Ram Narain Choudhary, Prof. Gokul

Lal Asawa etc. They were released in November 1930. A number of Congress workers also courted arrest in the Non-Cooperation movement launched by Gandhiji in 1932. The same year Ram Chandra Narhari Bapat, owing allegiance to the 'Hindustan Socialist Republic Army', was sentenced to 10 year's rigorous imprisonment on charges of attempt to murder the District Magistrate of Ajmer. In 1935 Jwala Prasad, Ramsingh and Ramesh Chandra Vyas were arrested in the well known Dogra shooting case. Ramsingh was sentenced to 7 years' rigorous imprisonment while others were acquitted.

In the Quite India Movement of 1942, a large number of Congress workers were arrested. Two of them, viz., Jwala Prasad and Raghu Rajsingh escaped from jail in January 1944. Others were released in 1945. When India became free in 1947, Ajmer-Merwara was made a Part C State. A Legislative assembly was established and elections were held. The Congress party, which captured majority of the seats, formed the Government with Hari Bhau Upadhyaya as Chief Minister. On November 1, 1956 it became part of Rajasthan consequent to the reorganisation of States in India.

### **Economy**

The area of the Ajmer-Merwara was 2711 sq. miles. It consisted of two districts, Ajmer and Merwara. The Aravalli range ran through the province north to south. The hills between Ajmer and Nasirabad mark the watershed of India. The rain falling on the eastern side is drained off into the Bay of Bengal and that of the western side into the Arabian sea.

The region had five streams viz., the Khari, the Dai, the Saraswati, the Sagarmati, and the Banas. They were all non-perennial. Though the average rainfall in the province was 20 inches, it was generally irregular. The agriculture depended mostly on wells and the tanks. Even prior to the advent of British rule in Ajmer-Merwara, the suba was divided into Khalsa (crown land), the Istimarari, the Jagirs and the Bhooms. The Jagirdars and Bhoonias held small holdings.

Out of 740 villages of the suba, 470 belonged to the Khalsa and the rest 270 to the Istimarardars. In the Khalsa area the tenants had bishvedari rights. The Istimarardars paid a quit rent for their holdings. The jagir land was either an endowment of a charitable nature or was given as a personal reward, whereas the land held by Bhoonias was in

lieu of military services. The Marahatas had collected revenue of Rs. 1.29 lakhs from the Khalsa and Rs. 2.17 lakhs from the Istimarardars before they ceded the suba to the British.

The first regular settlement of the province was made at Rs. 2.62 lakhs in 1875 AD. It was revised to Rs. 2.99 lakhs in 1886. The settlement held during 1906-10 reduced the demand to Rs. 2.80 lakhs of which Rs. 52,000 represented as irrigation cess and the rest formed fixed revenue. The average cultivated area was about 1.50 lakh acres. While Khalsa areas were subjected to regular settlement operations, no systematic survey of istimarari villages was undertaken. The istimarari estates were paying practically the same revenue as had been assessed by the Maharathas. On the other hand they were free to charge land revenue and other cesses from the tenants in the manner they liked. The revenue rates charged consequent to the settlement in 1940 were chahi Rs. 1 and As. 4 to Rs. 6 and As. 11, talabi As. 14 to Rs. 2, Api Rs. 1 and As. 3 to Rs. 3 and Barani As. 5 to Rs. 1 and As. 1. The istimarardars charged rent only for the actual cultivated area from year to year. The Kharif crop was assessed at fixed rate per bigha known as bighodi. The Rabi was assessed at a share of produce. The istimarardar's share ranged from one half to one fourth of the produce.

In the Khalsa area the State was the actual proprietor but the tenants gradually acquired the rights of the proprietorship known as Vishwedari. As long as a tenant paid the rent he could not be ejected from the land. He had the right to sell or mortgage or gift his land. In the istimarardari system, the Istimarar was considered as the owner of the land and the cultivator was the tenant at will but there too, in most of the villages, the cultivators gradually acquired the right of continuing the possession of their lands subject to payment of rent.

The province was rich in mineral deposits. The main minerals were mica, beryl, quartz, fiespar and emerald. The mica mines had been worked for more than a century. The emerald mines were also worked for quite a long time. The limestone deposits were found at Gagwana, Mokhampura, Hatundi etc.

The B.B. & C.I. Railway workshop at Ajmer, which employed 8000 persons, was the biggest employer. Three textile mills established at Beawar and another at Vijayanagar during the British rule provided employment to nearly 4000 workers. The first cotton mills was floated at Beawar in 1889 with a capital of Rs. 7 lakhs. The factory, known as

the Krishna Mills, had 250 looms and more than 12000 spindles. The Edward Mills was established in 1906 with a capital of Rs. 6.4 lakhs. It had 1400 spindles and 300 looms. The third mills (The Mahalaxmi Textile Mills) was set up in 1925 with 7000 spindles and 200 looms which were later on increased to 13000 spindles and 416 looms. A textile mills, known as Vijaya Cotton Mills, was set up at Vijayanagar in 1941. It had 14000 spindles and 316 looms. The wages per capita in the textile industry were Rs. 11 per month in 1939 which rose gradually to Rs. 30 in 1948.

In the field of small industry, the province had a number of wool cleaning factories and cotton ginning factories. Gota making was an important cottage industry in the province. About 5000 families were engaged in this profession.

The Cooperative Credit Societies Act came into force in the province in 1904. By 1931 there were 655 societies in the province with a membership of more than 20,000. By 1940, however, the number of societies fell to 463 and membership to 7811. This was due to the depression of the thirties. The first known agricultural credit society was established in the province in 1889-90. In 1928-29, the number of societies rose to 66 with a membership of more than 2000 persons. In 1939-40 the societies of this type were 169 with a membership of about 8000 and the working capital of more than Rs. 18 crore. The first provincial cooperative bank was established at Ajmer in 1910. It financed the various societies in the province. Apart from the Central Cooperative Bank, there were banking unions at various towns in the province.

A branch of the Imperial Bank of India was established at Ajmer in 1923. Later on the State Bank of Jaipur, the Punjab National Bank, the Bank of Baroda, the Central Bank of India and the Bank of Rajasthan also established their branches in one or more towns of Ajmer-Merwara.

Ajmer had been generally deficit in foodgrains. It, therefore, met its requirements from Punjab and Uttar Pradesh. It also imported raw cotton to feed the textile mills.

Even in ancient times Ajmer was well connected by trade routes. During the Mughal period, the armies from Delhi to South India passed through Ajmer. The modern roads were, however, constructed during the British rule. The National Highway No. 8 between Delhi and Bombay passed through Ajmer-Merwara. The first railway line came to Ajmer

on August 1, 1875 when the town was connected with Khandawa. The line was a part of the Rajputana Malwa railways which was handed over to the Bombay, Baroda and Central India Railways in January 1885 on a 99 years lease. The line was, however, taken over by the Centre back in January 1943. Ajmer was the headquarters of the meter guage system of the B.B. & CIR. Later on the railway tract between Delhi and Ahmedabad also passed through Ajmer. The total railway tract in Ajmer Province was 104 miles.

The total population of Ajmer Merwara in 1891 was 4.82 lakhs. It came down to 4.26 lakhs in 1901 due to the great famine of 1899-1900. In 1911 it was 4.49 lakhs in 1921, 4.47 lakhs in 1931, 5.06 lakhs and in 1941, 5.84 lakhs. Though the population of Ajmer town was predominantly Hindu, the town was cosmopolitan in character. It had a sizable population of Muslims, Christians, Jains and Sikhs. There were about 250 Zorastrians too. The Mers of Merwara claimed decent from Rajputs. Some of them later on were converted to Islam and were called Merats. Yet with the exception of being circumcised and burying their deads, all their customs conformed to those of the Hindu Mers. Till recently there were inter- marriages between the Mers and the Merats. Incidentally even the Mers took meat of cows.

### **Arya Samaj Movement**

The Arya Samaj movement influenced the province considerably. Its founder, Swami Dayanand Saraswati, breathed his last at Ajmer in 1883. The Arya Samajis opposed idol worship and believed in Ved and Vedants. They established a number of educational institutions in the town.

### **Education**

Ajmer, the headquarters of the province, had been an important centre of education in Rajasthan. The percentage of literacy in the province was 12.5 according to 1941 census, compared to bare 5.17 in entire Rajasthan. In the early years of the British rule there was one missionary school which received grant-in-aid from the Government and about 56 indigenous Hindi, Sanskrit, Arabic and Persian schools. In 1836 a Government school was opened at Ajmer. It was, however, closed in 1843 for want of students. In 1851 a Government school was opened at Ajmer again. It was raised to High school in 1857 and was affiliated to

he Calcutta University in 1861. A degree college was established in 1896. It was raised to post-graduate standard in 1916. The D.A.V. High School run by the Arya Samaj was raised to the intermediate standard in 1942. The Sanskrit Pathshala, established at Beawar in 1904 by the Sanatan Dharm Sabha, was raised to the intermediate standard in 1929.

The first girls' middle school was opened at Ajmer in 1896 by the French Congregation of St. Mary of the Angels. The second was established in 1914 and named as Savitri Girls school and the third was opened in 1919 by the Mission Sisters of Ajmer.

Ajmer had the distinction of having a Mayo college for the education of the sons of chiefs and nobles. It was established in 1875 on the suggestion of Lord Mayo. It was an autonomous institution which gave its own diploma upto 1944 when it introduced matriculation, intermediate and B.A. examinations of the Agra University and the Cambridge school certificate. In 1946 the college became a public school opened to all without any discrimination of class or creed.

In 1850 Government introduced a cess to defray the expenses on education and established 75 primary schools in the province. In 1857 the cess was abolished owing to the opposition of the people and consequently most of the schools were closed. In 1860 the Government restarted the schools. At the close of the 19th century the public primary schools in the province were 50 and those run privately 71. In 1903 there were 14 secondary schools including 5 High schools. In 1948-49 Ajmer Merwara had 459 educational institutions with more than 45000 boys and girls. Educationally Ajmer-Merwara led the rest of Rajasthan since the beginning of British rule in the province. It continued to march ahead even after freedom.









